

# Rolling Stone

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## Putin's Angels

Russia's  
Notorious  
Biker Gang

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SPECIAL  
REPORT

## War Inside the GOP

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★★★★

## 'Steve Jobs'

By Peter  
Travers

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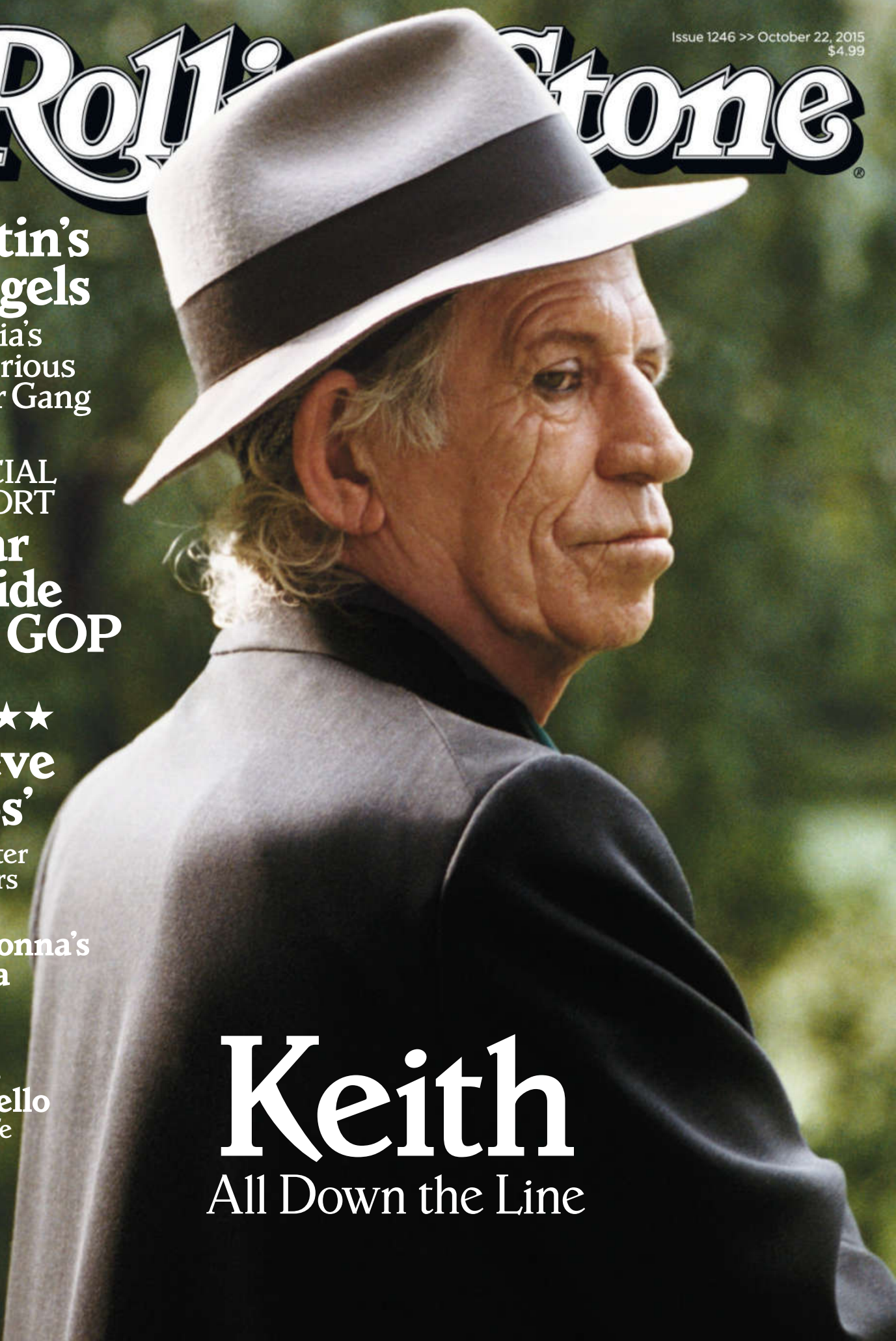
## Madonna's Mega Tour

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Elvis  
Costello  
My Life  
in 10  
Songs

# Keith

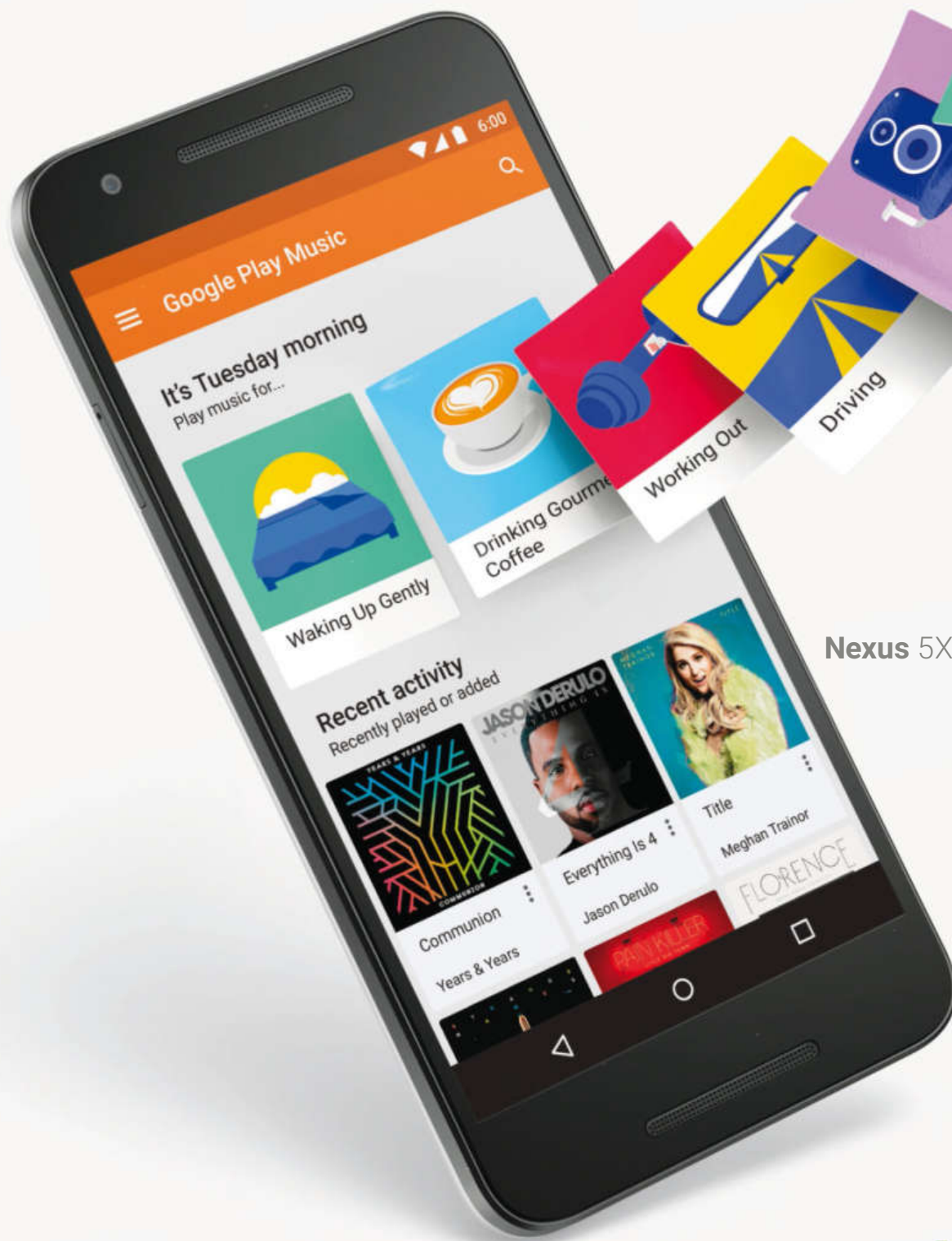
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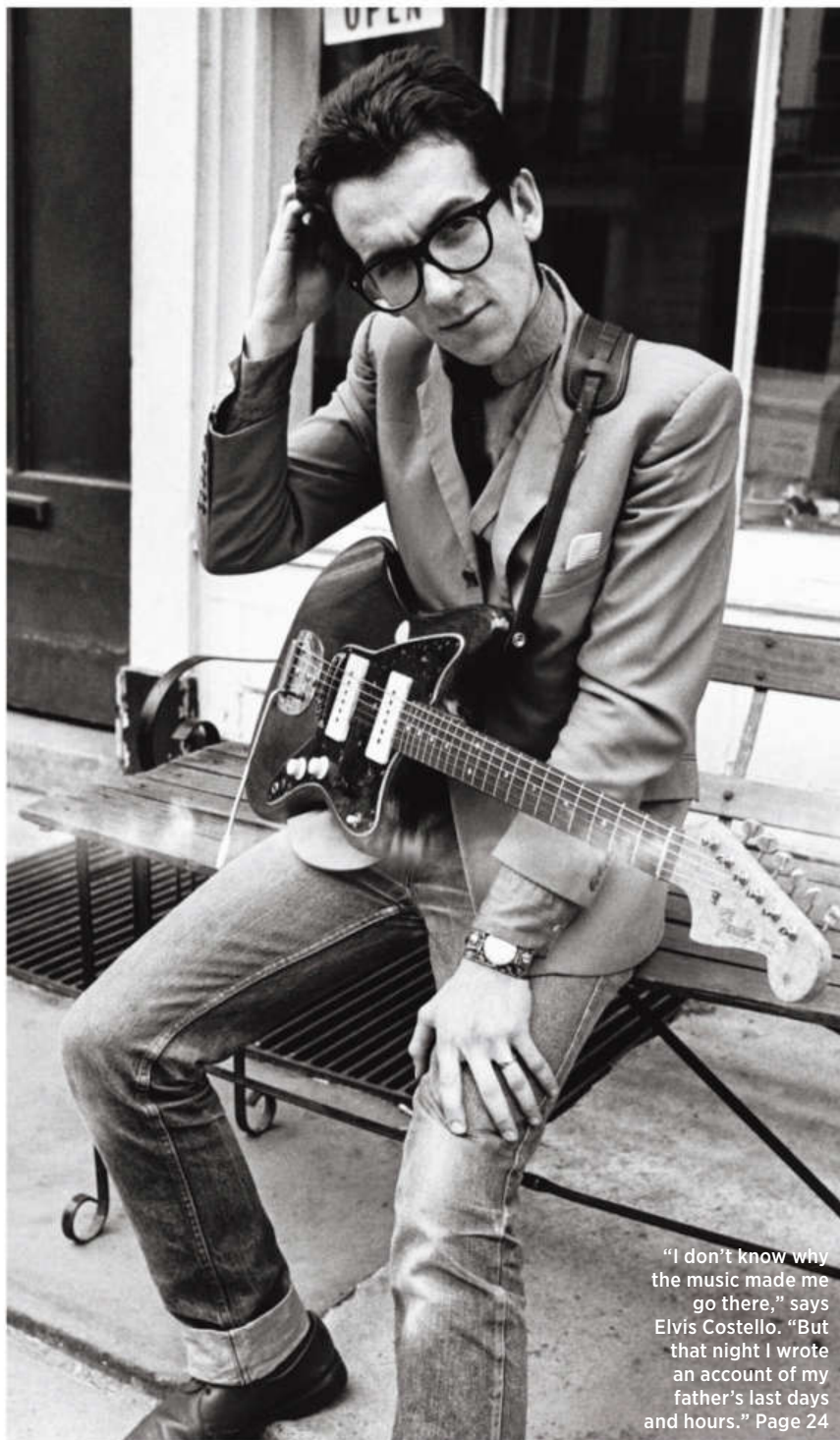
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"I don't know why the music made me go there," says Elvis Costello. "But that night I wrote an account of my father's last days and hours." Page 24

**ON THE COVER** Keith Richards photographed in Weston, Connecticut, on August 11th, 2015, by **Theo Wenner**.  
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Johnny Knoxville feels the pain in 2002.



RS FILMS

## 'JACKASS' TURNS 15

A decade and a half after the shocking show's debut, the cast reunites to explain the genius and the horror behind some of our favorite stunts - from the hilarious to the downright painful.



PREMIERE

## PHARRELL GETS DOWN

Hear his remix of A Tribe Called Quest's "Bonita Applebum," from the 25th-anniversary reissue of their debut album, *People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm*.



VIDEO

## T.I.'S FAVORITE NBA SQUAD

In "The Die-Hards," our new miniseries on musicians and athletes who are also hardcore fans, T.I. tells us about his love of the Atlanta Hawks. Presented by StubHub.



MOVIES

## MENDELSON BREAKS OUT

The *Bloodline* star from Australia made a name for himself playing dirtbags. Now Ben's ready to take the next step in the upcoming *Star Wars* spinoff *Rogue One*.

## 360 DEGREES OF COUNTRY!

Come to Rolling Stone Country for daily news, video and reviews on Nashville and beyond. This month, Charles Kelley of Lady Antebellum talks on camera about his "nerve-racking" solo debut - but also about why fans of his old group shouldn't be worried. Also: Luke Bryan's definitive Rolling Stone Country Interview.

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# Correspondence

Love Letters  
& Advice



## Trump, Pumped

A GOOD AND FAIR PORTRAYAL of Donald Trump ["Trump Seriously," RS 1244]. It's also interesting that when you look past his bombast and rhetoric and immigration shtick, Trump is basically addressing, however crudely, the massive outsourcing of millions of jobs from the economy. Except for maybe Bernie Sanders, what other candidate is even discussing this?

*Kathy Lowen, via the Internet*

THE TRUMP FEATURE REMINDS me of the movie *Almost Famous*, in which reporter William Miller tirelessly pursues rock star Russell Hammond for his story of the band and its music. Each time Miller is promised an interview, something else comes up to distract Hammond. The Donald is a whirlwind dervish of bluster, bravado, self-importance and clichés. At his next rally, I fully expect to hear him utter the phrase "I am a golden god" just before he leaps into a pool of frenzied Trumpketeers.

*Tom Gonter  
Marietta, GA*

WELL-WRITTEN PIECE ON A man known for his uncontrolled retaliation. Trump's supporters probably never noticed the story's subtle irony and satire.

*Monica Kaysen, via the Internet*

## The Radical Sermon

IN RS 1244, Mark Binelli examined the resistance of conservative American politicians and Catholic clergy to the populist vision of Pope Francis, then on the eve of his first trip to the U.S. ["Francis' American Crusade"]. Readers responded.

I TAKE BACK WHAT I SAID about not following men in funny hats. Pope Francis walks and talks like Jesus on Earth, preaching forgiveness and kindness. Thanks for a great story on the challenges he faces.

*JorgeGeorge Paez, Austin*

RIGHT-WING POLITICIANS hate the pope because he is openly advocating for the poor and the weakest among us. And calling for decentralized power. Radical.

*David Royce  
Via the Internet*

A VERY COMPELLING PIECE on a global leader who all species, not just humans, are counting on.

*Will Boyce, via the Internet*

WHAT A BRILLIANT MOVE to run the Trump story next to the feature on Pope Fran-

cis. I'm sure there are plenty of reactionaries in the Catholic Church and the GOP who wish their roles were reversed. Fortunately, though, we are in 2015, not 1215.

*David G. Swanson  
Via the Internet*



I DON'T AGREE WITH THE pope on many social issues, but getting the world off fossil fuel is too important. I welcome his call to action.

*Mark Moore, via the Internet*

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE pope's blunt talk on the death penalty. However you define it, life is sacred.

*Jan Simpson, via the Internet*

IS DONALD TRUMP AWARE that the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920 and that American women now vote in record numbers? His comment about fellow candidate Carly Fiorina's face left me with my mouth agape.

*Christine Fields, via the Internet*

YOU GAVE DONALD TRUMP rock-star status by putting his pic on the cover of ROLLING STONE? Way to inflate an already bloated ego! But maybe now his head will just explode and relieve our planet of his presence.

*Bill Schieve, via the Internet*

## Pacific Inferno

I JUST FINISHED TIM DICKINSON's article on the fires in the Pacific Northwest ["The Fire This Time," RS 1244] while watching footage of the devastating Butte and Valley fires in Northern California. How much more evidence do the climate deniers need?

*Bill Rieger, Sparks, NV*

## Howard Revealed

I'VE FOLLOWED TERENCE Howard's career since his amazing performance in *Hustle & Flow* ["Terrence How-

ard's Dangerous Mind," RS 1244]. Now that I've read his unfathomably sad back story, I realize what strength of will it took for him to survive. He's a bit mad, but also a true artist.

*Kimberly Dennis  
Via the Internet*

SUCH A POWERFUL INTERVIEW, riddled with mystery and questions. Howard's an amazing actor who lights the screen on fire. Now it seems his personal life is just as lit. Thanks for the insight into greatness.

*Laycee Bradbury  
Marquette, MI*

THE HOWARD PIECE WAS FASCINATING. He thinks one times one is two and will unveil the new math – he's certifiably insane. Who better than Erik Hedegaard to have interviewed him?

*Dave Steinfeld, New York*

## Tyson Teaches

I LOVED NEIL DEGRASSE TYSON's sly dig at climate skeptics ["The Smartest Man on TV," RS 1244]. His show aims to educate voters so they'll "never choose a candidate who's in denial of objectively established scientific truths." Good luck!

*Lenore Guthrie, via the Internet*

## Macklemore 2.0

THE FUNKIEST BOY IN POP returns, only to make mopeds cool in the process ["Macklemore Rides Back Into Town," RS 1244]. I knew he was no one-hit wonder.

*Kate Healey, via the Internet*

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# The Playlist

OUR FAVORITE SONGS ALBUMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW

## MY LIST



## Darlene Love

### Five Greatest Female Singers

"These are the artists I listen to when I get up in the morning," says Love, who's got a great new LP out now, produced by Steve Van Zandt.

### Barbra Streisand "People"

Barbra's voice is just so strong and so pure. The sound that came out of her mouth amazed me when I first saw her. It was almost like it was coming from her toes – like it wasn't real.

### Dionne Warwick "Don't Make Me Over"

I love her so much. I worked for Dionne as a backup singer for 10 years, and I drew a lot of strength from her.

**Aretha Franklin**  
"Ain't No Way"  
Aretha and I are kindred spirits. I love all of her songs, especially this one. It really moves you and touches your heart.

### Celine Dion "All by Myself"

Celine Dion came out of the blue for me. When I found out she was from Canada, I said, "I guess Canada has some great things to offer!"

**Carole King**  
"You've Got a Friend"  
It's almost impossible to pick one favorite song by Carole King, but this one sticks out for me. It tells you she's about humanity.

### 1. Thunderbitch "Closer"

Brittany Howard already put out one great album this year with Alabama Shakes – and her down-and-dirty new side project, Thunderbitch, is a sweet bonus. This garage-blues howler is the high-light.



### 2. Chvrches "Empty Threat"

The Scottish dance-pop trio don't leave you time to think on this tune from their latest LP, *Every Open Eye* – from the second that singer Lauren Mayberry's sparkling hook hits, you'll be swept up. It's a four-minute blast of ice-cold attitude and synths.

### 3. Sophie "MSMSMSM"

Ever danced so long at the club you thought you might actually be losing your mind? This exhilarating, hard-edged cut from the EDM iconoclast nails that feeling.

### 4. Thomas Rhett "Crash and Burn"

Country's next crossover star comes through with a breakup tune ("I think love is overrated/But I don't like throwing it away") that's catchy as hell, with just the right twist of twang.



### 5. Cat Power and Jakob Dylan "You Showed Me"

Jakob Dylan and Cat Power get their Nancy & Lee on for this chill cover of the Turtles' 1969 hit from an upcoming tribute LP to classic Southern California folk rock.

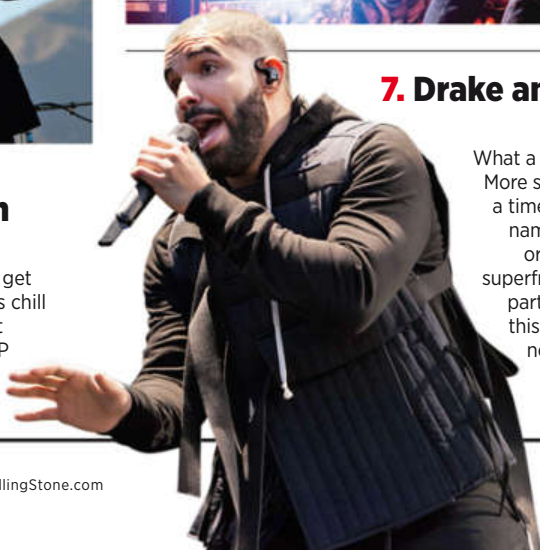
### 6. Bleachers and Tinashe "I Wanna Get Better"

Bleachers' Eighties anthem gets even cooler with R&B stunner Tinashe on vocals. It's the most fun moment on Bleachers' new all-female reimagining of their debut LP.



### 7. Drake and Future "Big Rings"

What a time to be alive! More specifically, what a time to be alive and named either Drake or Future! The rap superfriends throw the party of the year on this track from their new set. The beat alone will get you raging.





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# Rock & Roll

## Madonna's 'Rebel' Road Show

How the queen of pop pulled off her new mega tour  
By Andy Greene

**I**T'S THREE DAYS BEFORE the pope leads hundreds of thousands of people in a mass at Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Parkway, and four miles away at the Wells Fargo Center, one of America's most famous former Catholics is already getting into the spirit of the occasion. Madonna uses a giant cross as a stripper's pole and writhes around on a re-creation of the Last Supper table. "Popey-wopey is on his way over," she says later in the show. "I think he's stalking me." The gleefully blasphemous [Cont. on 14]

**STRIKE A POSE**  
Madonna onstage last month.

KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE





**"These songs mattered to me as much as any of my own songs."**

Adams in New York

# Ryan Adams' Most Unlikely Hit Ever

How his 'weird idea' to cover Taylor Swift's '1989' paid off

**A**S RYAN ADAMS TOURED THE COUNTRY last year, his bus was filled with the sound of a surprising obsession: Taylor Swift's *1989*. "I've been a fan of hers since [2008's] 'White Horse,'" says Adams. "Her songs are very solid – there's not a lot of bullshit." Playing the album nonstop, Adams was struck with "this weird idea": to record unplugged versions of the songs along the lines of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*.

His idea finally became a reality in August, when he knocked out a complete (and as it turned out, mostly plugged-in) remake of Swift's album in three weeks. A few weeks after that, his version of *1989* became 2015's most surprising hit album. Thanks to Swift's endorsement (including a Beats 1 interview where she raved about the album), it sold 50,000 digital copies its first week and debuted in the Top 10.

Adams says he initially planned to just play it for friends – including Swift, with whom he collaborated on an unreleased song a few years ago. But when Swift raved about it ("She was so stoked"), Adams decided to "let it live." Given the buzz, no one questions his change of heart. "I'm not sure if a lot of Taylor Swift fans will be Ryan Adams fans," says Mark Hudson, rock buyer at the 300-store Transworld chain. "But it introduces him to more people."

For Adams, the album had a surprising personal meaning: Tackling Swift's songs helped Adams work through his recent split with Mandy Moore. "As I was singing those songs, they mattered to me as much as any of my own songs ever did," he says. "Or I wouldn't have sung them."

DAVID BROWNE

## MADONNA

[Cont. from 13] moment is one of 21 elaborately choreographed numbers on Madonna's *Rebel Heart* tour, which has been packing North American arenas since it kicked off September 9th. It's her most extravagant stage show ever – a two-hour set that features samurai warriors, matadors, gypsies, rockabilly kids dancing around a body shop, and a dangerous-looking dance routine on top of giant swaying poles, not to mention a grand finale set in a gleaming 1920s-style Paris cafe. "When audiences walk into the show, they walk into a magical world," Madonna says. "They plug into the matrix of my creative brain."

"The logistical avalanche of putting it together was unlike anything I've ever done," says Arianne Phillips, the head costume designer, who notes the tour uses 500 pairs of shoes and 450 costumes. "Every day of rehearsals felt like an impossibility." To prepare for the show, the 20 backup dancers spent three months putting in 14-hour days, six days a week. The 57-year-old Madonna was right beside them. "No matter what we asked her to do, like riding a nun like a surfboard, she'd try without flinching," says Megan Lawson, the tour's head choreographer.

Like all of Madonna's recent tours, the set list centers around her new album, this year's *Rebel Heart* – but there's also a healthy serving of 1980s classics, with re-

worked arrangements. Midway through the show, she takes a seat and plays "True Blue," a song she hadn't touched in nearly three decades, on ukulele. "I suck at the ukulele," she says with a laugh. "I gotta pay attention."

The tour, which runs through March, could be the final piece of a 10-year deal with Live Nation that netted Madonna \$120 million. She says her future touring plans aren't yet clear, though she can envision herself on the road 15 years from now, perhaps with a more low-key stage setup. "I could see myself sitting on a stool with a bottle of wine, a guitar and working my stand-up comedy into the whole scenario," Madonna says. "I like the idea of doing something simple."



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# Fogerty Hasn't Forgotten

In a new memoir, the Creedence legend sounds off on one of rock's oldest feuds (and much more)

**F**OR CREEDENCE CLEARWATER Revival, the beginning of the end came during a group meeting in October 1970, when John Fogerty's bandmates dropped a bombshell on him: After nine Top 10 hits in three years – all written by Fogerty – they wanted Creedence to become a democracy, with everyone contributing equally to the songwriting. “They just wanted to go into the studio and come up with songs by osmosis,” Fogerty writes in his new memoir, *Fortunate Son: My Life, My Music*. “These guys had no clue about what was necessary. A vision. That’s just the truth.... To me that was scary... a disaster.... Can I go so far as to say catastrophic?”

Creedence lasted just two more years, dissolving after the disastrous *Mardi Gras*, on which bassist

Stu Cook and drummer Doug Clifford wrote songs for the first time. In *Fortunate Son*, Fogerty opens up like never before about the short and tumultuous life of the band – as well as

his up-and-down solo career and personal struggles. It’s a story that Fogerty, 70, has wanted to tell for years. “I always felt frustrated when I read articles about myself,” he says. “Sometimes I looked really bad. I’d see myself ranting or complaining or something. Finally, I just said, ‘I’m going to write a book.’” Eight years ago, Fogerty sat down in front of a video camera and spent countless hours telling his entire life story, which he later spun into the book.

*Fortunate Son* covers everything from Fogerty’s pre-Creedence days in the Army Reserve to his battle with alcohol in the 1980s and 1990s, something he’s rarely discussed. Fogerty stops short of calling himself an alcoholic, but his drinking got so bad that it almost cost him his relationship with his girlfriend, Julie (now his wife). “I can have a glass of wine with dinner now and be OK,” he says.



“But I was psychologically addicted. I was doing everything that an alcoholic does.”

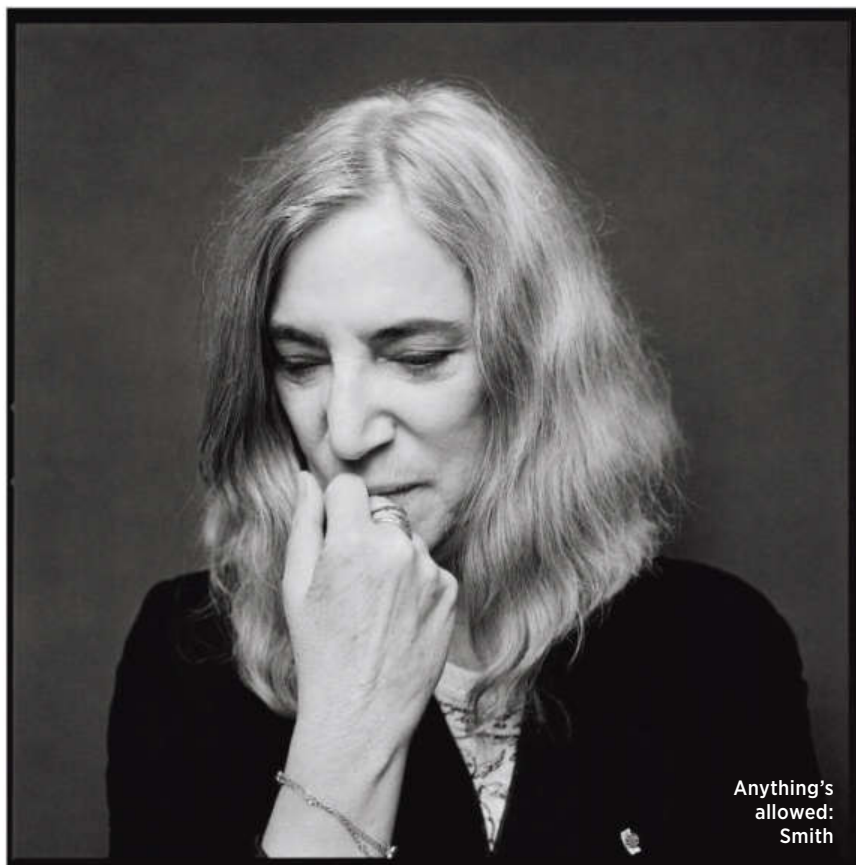
The biggest villain in the book is Saul Zaentz, the former label head who owned Creedence’s copyrights. Zaentz sued Fogerty for plagiarism because he felt the singer’s 1984 hit “The Old Man Down the Road” was too similar to CCR’s “Run Through the Jungle” – the only time an artist was ever sued for ripping himself off. (The suit was dismissed.) “He robbed us and owned all of our music,” Fogerty says.

Even after Creedence broke up, Fogerty still owed Zaentz his next 147 songs thanks to an unfortunate contract CCR had signed in their early days. “Music, my career – it all seemed to be in the rearview mirror, with every avenue blocked off,” he writes. “And my gift was gone.”

By the late 1980s, the other members of Creedence – including Fogerty’s brother, Tom – sold their shares in the band to Zaentz, which Fogerty compares to Judas betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Tom Fogerty died in 1990, his feud with his brother still unresolved. Today, Cook and Clifford play casinos and state fairs as Creedence Clearwater Revisited, with a Fogerty sound-alike on vocals. “It sticks in my craw that they run around calling themselves Creedence,” Fogerty says. In other words, don’t expect any sort of reunion tour. “I’m not going to seek that out,” he says. “They’ve been pretty poisonous to me, and in life itself, I’m pretty happy.”

Fogerty’s last album, 2013’s *Wrote a Song for Everyone*, was a stellar covers set, but he hasn’t released an LP of original material since 2007’s *Revival*. He hopes to remedy that soon. “Every day I practice guitar,” he says. “Lately, I’ve started to go, ‘Wow, that could be a cool little lick. Maybe I should make a song out of that.’ I’m gearing up.” Another thing he hopes to do soon is finally watch *The Big Lebowski*, the 1998 stoner classic that introduced his music to a new generation of fans. “It’s become this whole thing,” he says. “Someday I’ll watch it. Right now, I’ve got kids.

We watch a lot of *SpongeBob SquarePants*.” **ANDY GREENE**



Anything's  
allowed:  
Smith

## Patti Smith's Dream

The follow-up to the punk poet's acclaimed 2010 memoir is a wild, experimental ride

PATTI SMITH BEGAN HER CAREER writing poetry books (*Seventh Heaven*) and for rock magazines (including this one), and her songs have always been steeped in literary tradition. So it's no surprise that the successor to her National Book Award-winning memoir is, once again, no boilerplate rock-star flashback. But where *Just Kids* follows a line through Smith's coming of age with late soulmate Robert Mapplethorpe, *M Train* is an impressionistic weave of dreams, disasters, space-outs and epiphanies, a meditation on life and art by a woman who sees them as one.

As on *Horses* ("Jesus died for somebody's sins, but not mine"), Smith slings a great lead. "It's not so easy writing about nothing," she begins here. In fact, she processes everything from outlandish encounters (a wee-hour singalong with chess master Bobby Fischer) to cleaning up cat puke to murder fantasies. For the follow-up to a



surprise bestseller, *M Train* is also bravely experimental. Amid a traveling writer's solitude and memories of her late husband, former MC5 guitarist Fred Smith, are hallucinated conversations (with a TV remote and Nikola Tesla, among others) plus jump-cuts into literature (Haruki Murakami, Roberto Bolaño) and TV (*The Killing*). Unfortunately, few of Smith's reflections involve music, and the book meanders at times. But her caffeinated flow has its charms, and the beauty of her writing – "the pink sky was veined in lightning" – breaks through to buoy the dull spots.

Near the end of *Just Kids*, Smith railed, "Why can't I write something that would awake the dead?" With *M Train* – titled for a vision Smith had near Frida Kahlo's birthplace – she has. She is a generation's great medium, freestyling séances over diner coffee, across years of magical thinking.

WILL HERMES

## Reliving the Genius and the Tragedy of the King of Pop

Most Michael Jackson books either try to understand his pop brilliance or dive into his tragic life. Veteran journalist (and ROLLING STONE contributing editor) Steve Knopper balances the musical and the personal, packing the 400



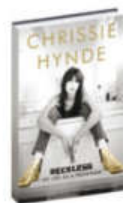
pages of *The Genius of Michael Jackson* with fascinating anecdotes, covering every stage of the singer's career in vivid detail – from pre-adolescent stardom to unprecedented crossover success with *Thriller* and *Bad*

to his tortured, embattled final years. The section on Jackson's childhood is especially gripping; one heartbreaking story describes an early Jackson 5 recording session where Michael's tyrannical father, Joe, is so abusive that a producer pulls a gun on him and tells him not to come back while they're working. Later, we relive the all-too-familiar consequences of that turmoil as Jackson's life spins out of control. But this isn't a salacious tell-all; as its title implies, it's an authoritative account of a world-changing force of nature who once described his creative process as "standing under a tree and letting a leaf fall and trying to catch it – it's that beautiful."

JON DOLAN

## Chrissie Hynde, No Pretender

The subtitle of Chrissie Hynde's new memoir, *Reckless*, may be "My Life as a Pretender," but by the time she gets to the formation of her pivotal New Wave band, the book is about 75 percent done. It turns out that's not a problem, because somehow the daughter of a secretary



and a phone-company man from Akron, Ohio, found herself at an absurd number of key cultural moments in the 1960s and 1970s – from the Kent State shootings to Ziggy Stardust's first American concert (she gave David Bowie

a ride in her mom's car that night) to the London punk scene, where she fronted an early version of the Clash. Hynde writes with complete frankness. A passage where she recounts being gang-raped by a group of bikers has already caused controversy. "You can't fuck around with people, especially people who wear 'I Heart Rape' and 'On Your Knees' badges," she writes. **ANDY GREENE**





## Wolf Alice Bring the Noise, Nineties Alt-Rock Style

**Who:** A London noise-pop quintet who crashed the U.K. Top 10 with their debut album, *My Love Is Cool*.

**Sound:** Wolf Alice flash back to that Nineties moment when bands like Nirvana and Hole turned raw, heavy guitar rock into radio pop, with burly hooks and provocatively smart lyrics courtesy of stage-diving frontwoman Ellie Rowsell.

**Drink and Dive:** "When I was younger, I went to shows and saw people crowd-surfing and getting drunk," says Rowsell. "That looked a lot more fun than sitting down and singing folk songs."

**Young, Gifted and Sad:** Rowsell, 23, says she writes lyrics "about my teenage self," adding, "Sometimes darker feelings are more interesting to me - they're easier to translate into art." **WILL HERMES**

## A Harrowing Road to Punk-Rock Glory

How Fidler frontman Zac Carper confronted heroin addiction and made a great, grueling album

**T**HE SELF-TITLED 2013 DEBUT ALBUM BY THE LOS ANGELES BAND FIDLAR was one of the most exciting punk records in recent memory, a raucous set of songs with titles like "Wake Bake Skate," "Cocaine" and "Cheap Beer." But for the band's singer and primary songwriter, Zac Carper, the party had a dark side. "I was slamming dope and shooting speed," he says. "Every time I would come home to L.A., I would tell myself, 'I'm not going to do heroin.' And I always ended up doing it." Then, just as the band was getting ready to go on a major tour, Carper learned that his girlfriend was dead from a drug overdose. "She was my first girlfriend. We needed to get off the drugs," he says. "We'd go a couple of days and just... it just couldn't happen. We just couldn't do it."

Carper eventually got sober. But it wasn't a trip to rehab that did the trick. It was a call from a fellow punk rocker, Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day, a Fidler fan and recovered addict. "I had just gotten out of rehab," Carper says. "All my friends were drug addicts, all my friends were alcoholics, and band members weren't talking to each other. [Billie Joe] just told me, 'Dude, fucking don't worry about what people think about you.' That was a turning point. Billie Joe has been through everything. He's re-established what it meant to be punk rock."

Carper channeled his struggles into Fidler's excellent second LP, *Too*, which mixes the wasted-bros ebullience of their debut with grueling personal lyrics. On the torturous "Overdose," Carper strove to mirror a near-death experience he had shooting heroin. "I wanted the music to feel like I'm being, like, brought back to life," he says. *Too* is unique in that it also offers the band's perspective on Carper's struggles. On "Bad Medicine," bassist Brandon Schwartzel sings, "I'll drown my liver, lie and say I'm sick/While you shake in your room, trying to kick that bad medicine." Says Carper, "At first I was very weirded out by that. But I can see it's an awesome song, now that I have the clarity."

JON DOLAN



Hill



Hungry young things  
Wolf Alice

## Judith Hill Goes From Backup to Breakout

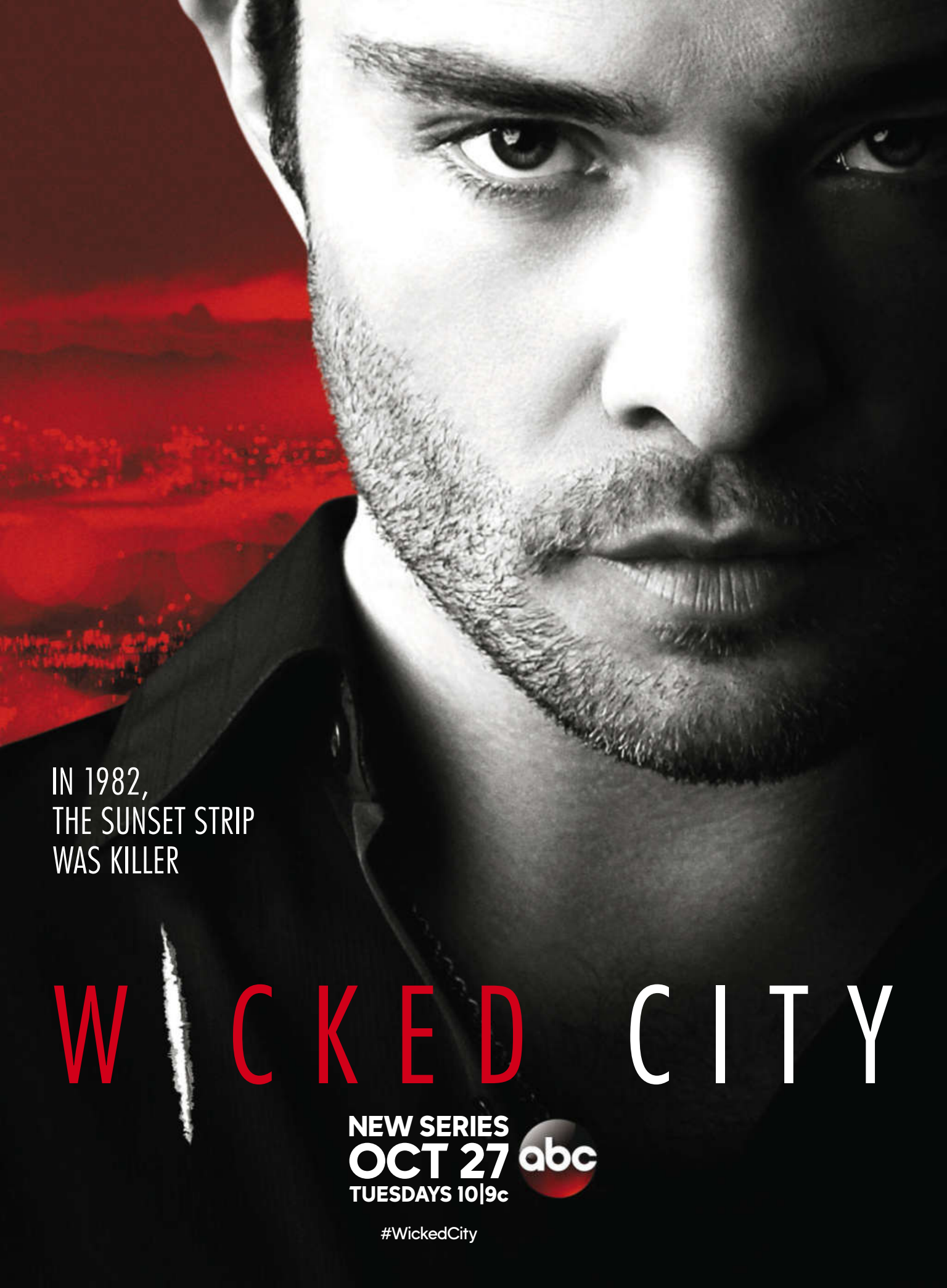
**Who:** An R&B powerhouse making her move after years as a backup singer.

**Sound:** Thirty-one-year-old Hill's debut, *Back in Time*, has a vintage-soul feel, with jazz shadings and a powerful dose of post-Ferguson social commentary.

**Thrill Ride:** Hill has worked with artists like Michael Jackson, Elton John and, most recently, Prince. (She appears in the 2013 documentary *20 Feet From Stardom*, about the lives of backup singers.) She says Jackson "made me realize this is what I can do."

**Purple Pain:** This year Hill was featured prominently on Prince's album *Hit N Run*, and Prince also co-produced *Back in Time*. During recording sessions at Paisley Park in Minneapolis, he loosened the mood by challenging Hill to games of ping-pong. "I definitely treasure my time spent there," she says. **BRITTANY SPANOS**

FROM TOP: ALICE BAXLEY; SACHA LECCA; EARL GIBSON III/GETTY IMAGES



IN 1982,  
THE SUNSET STRIP  
WAS KILLER

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**FUNK SOUL BROTHERS**

Guy and Howard Lawrence (from left) in London

# It's Good to Be the Dance Kings

How two prog-rock fans from the London suburbs conquered American radio and became the coolest artists in dance music

BY SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

**O**N A CRISP SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON, Guy Lawrence parks his late-model Jaguar on a side street in London, a few spaces ahead of his brother Howard's Audi. Together they walk over to Shoreditch House, a members-only club, waving hello at a Scandinavian-accented receptionist as they stroll through the lobby. Prospective members of the exclusive institution are expected to complete a stringent application process involving recommendations, an essay and a £200 fee. But the Lawrence brothers, better known as the superstar dance-music duo Disclosure, didn't bother with any of that: Shoreditch House waived its requirements and welcomed them to the club when they played a DJ set here last year.

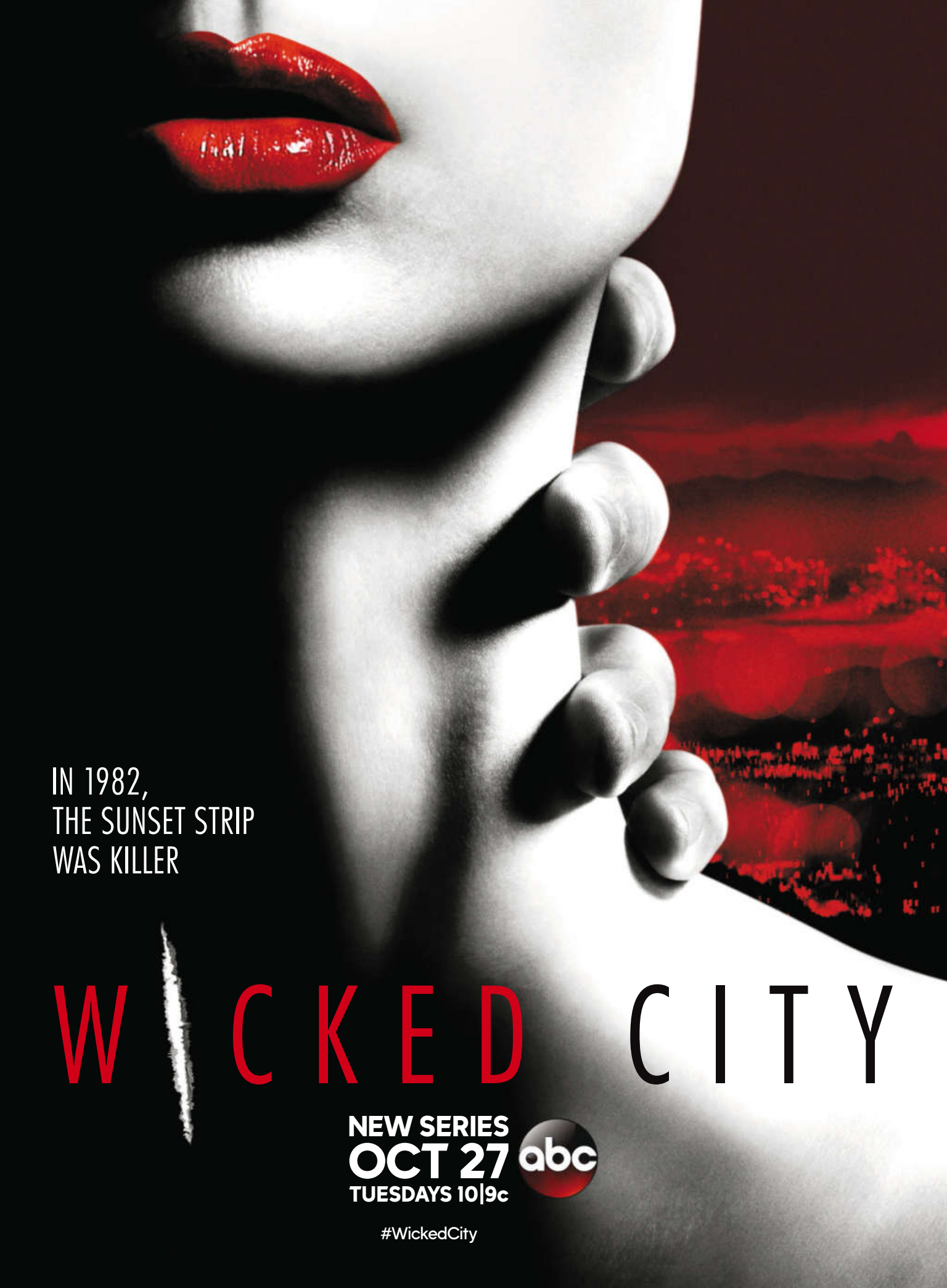
Everyone wants to be on Disclosure's team right now. In 2012, just a few years after they started making music together as teens, they crafted a worldwide smash with the sleek club-soul groove "Latch," featuring vocals from their pal Sam Smith (it eventually went triple-platinum in the U.S.). Their second album — this fall's lush *Caracal*, featuring guest vocals from Lorde, Miguel, the Weeknd and more — is the crown jewel of a year in which they've moved steadily inward from pop's cutting edge to its glittering center. Kanye West approached Guy backstage at a festival this summer to propose working together; a few months earlier, a parade of A-listers showed up at the post-Grammys house party they threw at an \$83 million Bel-Air mansion, where they DJ'd for seven hours straight with their good friend

Diplo. "Taylor was there dancing all night; Katy was there," Guy says. "Mark Ronson showed up at 4 a.m. All the famous people came, and no paparazzi. It was so fun."

"I didn't do anything rock & roll that night," Howard says as a waiter brings two flat-white coffees to the roomy armchairs where they're sitting. "I just had way too long of a chat with Ed Sheeran."

Guy laughs. "Yeah, you fucked up."

The brothers are dressed almost identically in black jeans, neutral-colored T-shirts, and sneakers. Guy, 24, the duo's drummer and production wizard, is the more outgoing of the two. Howard, 21, a talented bassist who takes a lead role in writing Disclosure's melodies and lyrics, has a more understated personality and a major appreciation for *The Lord of the Rings*. "I'm wearing



IN 1982,  
THE SUNSET STRIP  
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the ring – like, *the ring*,” he says, slipping a fat gold band from his hand to show off the detailed movie replica that Smith bought him for his birthday this past spring. “Don’t put it on, you’ll disappear,” he adds with a giggle. Both of them are also wearing limited-edition Omega watches that suggest serious wealth (recommended retail price: \$16,600 each) without being flashy. Guy explains that the timepieces were a gift from Omega after they licensed a track for a TV commercial. “It was advertising a watch called the Ladymatic, which sounds like a dildo,” he says. “Nice payment for doing absolutely nothing.”

Before “Latch” made impact on the charts, Guy and Howard figured they would end up as session players or music teachers. But the song made them stars at home within weeks of its release, and it kept growing. “I think we played 57 festivals one year, plus our own live shows and DJ sets,” Guy says. “We worked our ass off for two years – and then, just as we thought it might wind down, we got a call from Jimmy Iovine: ‘I want to make “Latch” the biggest song of the summer.’”

Interscope’s then-chief had just witnessed Disclosure’s April 2013 Coachella performance in person. “I was really impressed,” Iovine tells me later. “These guys really have it. You’d have to be legally dead to miss it.”

With his help, Disclosure launched an even bigger American tour that sent “Latch” into *Billboard*’s Top 10 by the following July. The brothers became the pop face of the dance-music renaissance. “It was the most fun you could possibly imagine,” Guy says. “I’d drink a half bottle of tequila, then go onstage in front of 10,000 people singing our songs back to us as loud as they can, then go DJ in a club, then party all night with our friends. You have to pinch yourself: ‘How am I getting paid to do this?!’”

The brothers linger at Shoreditch House for the afternoon before heading to a high-end sushi spot for dinner. Once there, Guy confidently orders £356 worth of buttery yellowtail slices, black cod chunks and other delicacies, and sends back a gin-and-tonic for being insufficiently fizzy. “I like to sample the fruits of the world,” he says. “I drink every day on tour. I’ve definitely nearly wet myself in DJ booths.”

Howard, meanwhile, sips a virgin mojito: Unlike his brother, the younger Lawrence doesn’t drink. “I just don’t like it,” he says. “I want to be



Skrillex

## Behind the DJ Booth

Disclosure’s influences go way beyond house music. Here are five unexpected genres that went into their mix.

### Prog Rock

Howard Lawrence admires Rush’s refusal to bend to trends: “Our dad told me that Geddy Lee started wearing skinny jeans when it was cool. Then it became horribly uncool, now it’s cool again. So you’ve just got to keep wearing your own jeans.”



Lee



Steely Dan

### Seventies Jazz Rock

The Lawrence brothers taught themselves their instruments in part by listening to tons of Steely Dan. “I would listen to songs that I liked,” says Howard. “Donald Fagen’s solo stuff – I used to work all of that out.”

### Nineties Pop

Howard says Seal’s 1991 debut was an early formative influence: “That led me into stuff like Jamiroquai.”



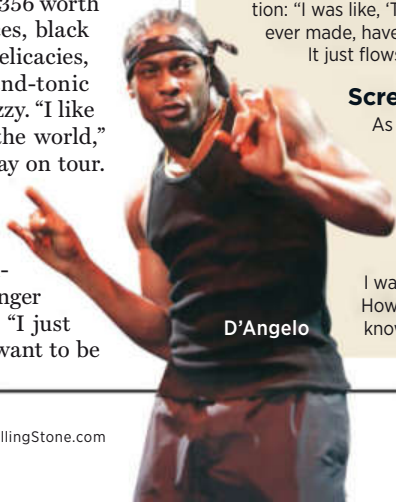
Seal

### Neo-Soul

Guy made Sam Smith listen to D’Angelo’s *Voodoo* early in their collaboration: “I was like, ‘This is the best album ever made, have you not heard this?’ It just flows so perfectly.”

### Screamo

As a teen, Howard was seriously into Warped Tour-friendly acts like Skrillex’s old screamo band, From First to Last. “When I met him, I was quite star-struck,” Howard says. “But I didn’t know any Skrillex songs!”



D’Angelo

on my own when I drink, and what’s the point of that?” This means that Howard ends up skipping most of Disclosure’s legendary afterparties. He did, however, indulge when their debut LP went Number One in the U.K. “He had two pints of lager,” Guy says, relishing the tale. “He was grinding on Sam Smith on the dance floor.”

Neither brother has ever gotten into drugs, despite having copious access to any substance on Earth. “All you see is the negative effects,” Howard says. “You have guys chatting about absolute bollocks in your ear all night, really loud, off their tits. Fuck that. I don’t want to be that.” “We’re the pussies of the dance-music scene,” Guy adds with a shrug. “I just want to live for a long time.”

The next day, Guy and Howard meet up at RAK Studios, where they wrote and recorded most of *Caracal*. Talk turns to *We Are Your Friends*, the recent box-office bomb in which Zac Efron plays a naive young DJ who gets caught up in a whirlwind of EDM-fueled glitz and drama. “It looks like an ill-informed version of what’s happened to us,” says Howard. “Emily Ratajkowski is the most attractive girl I’ve ever seen, though,” Guy says of the movie’s co-star. “I’d watch it with her, and I’d tell her it was wicked – but only if she agreed to be my girlfriend.” (Guy is currently single; Howard has a girlfriend of five years.)

Disclosure have never quite felt at home in the fist-pumping culture of mainstream EDM, even when they’re playing megaraves like Electric Daisy Carnival. The design of their world tour this fall is partly meant to highlight that distinction:

“A lot of those big shows are designed to distract you from the fact that the person in the middle is not actually doing anything,” Howard says. “We’ve got cameras on all of our stuff so that people can see exactly what we’re playing.” You can see just how much Disclosure like to win when they meet up the previous afternoon at a South London indoor go-cart track at their manager’s suggestion. Guy and Howard race around the turns far more aggressively than anyone, coming in first and second place out of seven drivers.

“Three for three!” Howard shouts gleefully, a few moments after sideswiping a vehicle with a terrified young woman at the wheel for another win. He looks up at the leaderboard, which shows that he’s beaten Guy’s second-place average time by a slim tenth of a second.

Guy slaps him on the back and smiles: “We crushed ‘em.”



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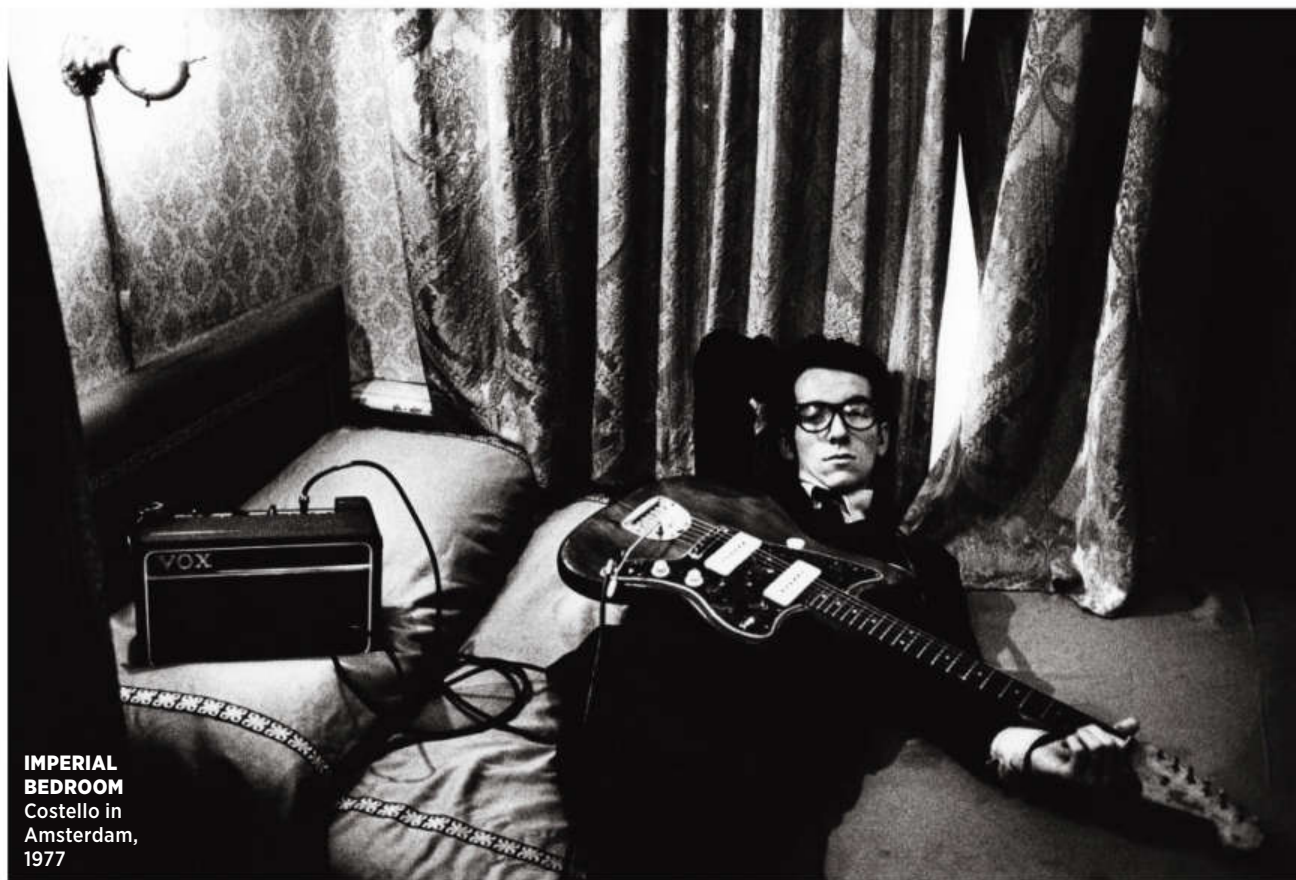
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## MY LIFE IN 10 SONGS

# Elvis Costello

How Bruce Springsteen and Margaret Thatcher – plus a little revenge and guilt – inspired some of Costello's greatest work

BY DAVID FRICKE

**I** WAS ASKED TO WRITE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY WHEN I was 24," says Elvis Costello, 61, on the day he receives his first hard-bound copy of his revelatory, evocatively crafted, highly entertaining new memoir, *Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink*. "I said, 'Could I just live some life?'"

Back then, Costello (born Declan MacManus), the son of a big-band vocalist, blew through rock & roll like a bespectacled tornado, fusing punk, American-roots music and slashing, literary candor on 1977's *My Aim Is True* and 1978's *This Year's Model*, the latter with his feral combo the Attractions.

Early on, he famously said that all of his songwriting was driven by revenge and guilt, an image-making quote he now laughs off. "That was never *all* that it was about," he says. "It just became a nice tagline to put next to my name. Even when I said it, I was daring people to go, 'Of course that's not true.' Unfortunately, some people are literal-minded."

Costello has since unleashed a torrent of songwriting across more than two dozen albums, collaborating with artists including Paul McCartney ("As his last co-written hit had been with Michael Jackson, I wondered whether I should be taking some dancing lessons," Costello writes in one of the book's best chapters), Burt Bacharach, Allen Toussaint and the Roots – not to mention a still-in-progress album with Kris Kristofferson and Rosanne Cash.

He's also explored an array of styles, from country to classical, that reflect his ever-broadening taste. "When you hear stuff and it leaves you cold, it passes you by, it is not the fault of the music," says Costello. "You weren't ready." He claims that he's not as prolific as he seems, that his "big curse is indolence." But he also acknowledges that even as he finished his book, he was working on 40 new songs. "That is not somebody who is slowing down," he says.

© ANTON CORBIN

## Radio Soul

(early version of Radio Radio) 1975

This was way before *My Aim Is True*. I recorded it with my semipro band Flip City, when we were doing all these things that were clearly indebted to Bruce Springsteen. Obviously, this song morphed into [the 1978 single] "Radio Radio." I took the pop hooks from this one and flipped its meaning to fit the furious mentality of 1977. But it's an odd thing: "Radio Radio" doesn't resonate to me now the way this one does. I sing this version now live and let the audience know this is what I meant to say. The idea is closer to [Van Morrison's] "Caravan": that you are tuned in to this mythic thing, radio, celebrated in Bruce's songs.

## Poison Moon 1976

It was the last in a group of songs where I was singing very quietly in my room, before I adopted the musical language that became *My Aim Is True*. I was playing these quiet songs in clubs, wondering why people weren't hanging on my every word! What I hadn't worked out was that people I admired, like John Prine and Randy Newman, had audiences who were aware of them, who fell to a hush to listen. But it's amusing to hear the musical jump that I made from this style to the first album. And now I play this song a lot, because people come to listen to me.

## (The Angels Wanna Wear My) Red Shoes 1977

This was more like a visitation. I wrote it in 10 minutes on a train out of Liverpool – the whole song in one gulp. I had the essential image, then I worked backward – a dancehall scene with the put-down lines. That kind of framed this other, weirder idea of "I won't get any older" – I went, "Why am I saying this when I'm 22?" And then there was the whole comedic thing of getting it down. Nowadays you can demo things on your phone. I had to block it out in my mind. Then I had to get off the train, get to my mother's house, grab an old guitar I had there and play the song until I imprinted it in my memory. I had no tape recorder. I had no way other than repetition to drill it into my head so I wouldn't lose it.

## High Fidelity 1980

This is a pretty exciting record. It's very raw singing and a great rhythm track. We cut it in Holland, where we had nothing else to do but go mad in the studio. But as I wrote in the book, it's "an incredibly sad delusion of a song in which a couple finds themselves in different rooms with different lovers, one of them still irrationally be-

lieving that their pledge will endure the faithlessness." So sometimes the ferocity in the music was real. But songs like "Lip Service" [on *This Year's Model*] and "Mystery Dance" [on *My Aim Is True*] were sort of a joke – a few ideas thrown together with a hook. I was making fun of the ability to write facile pop songs very quickly. The weird thing was people liked it. And I had to find a way to like it myself, because people wanted to hear it.

## New Lace Sleeves 1981

Some of the best things the Attractions did, like this one, were at slower tempos. It's a myth that it's all about speed and power. "New Lace Sleeves" is almost like dub reggae. I wrote the first lines in about 1974. I was writing a big, grand song about postwar life; it was called "From Kansas to Berlin." But the carnal comedy in there, all the embarrassment of the

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**"I started my career with all these furious ideas, and people somehow feel it's a betrayal if you don't represent that all the time. But life is more complicated than that."**

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morning after – I didn't know that stuff so well then. I knew it pretty well by the time of this song. It also was about class and control. People used to say Margaret Thatcher held her Cabinet with some sort of sexual magnetism. Power is seductive. The fact that the music was slinky suited the words. We had to be exhausted to play like that. We had to drain ourselves of the impulse to play fast.

## Beyond Belief 1982

The big change of *Imperial Bedroom* was giving yourself more space to try things. We had never been in the studio for 12 weeks. We were also moving into the period of big open-spaced music – U2, Echo and the Bunnymen – and suddenly our tight little songs were out of step. This is a ranting kind of song. I was consciously writing words that didn't make sense – to make a blurred picture, because I was living a blurred life. But Pete Thomas' drumming is so insane. I felt if I let him have his energy, the rest of us played more orchestrally and I sang quietly, it would be much more persuasive. It was the closest we came to that big music – and we never did that again. I didn't want to sound like we were trying to catch up with the young guys.

## Indoor Fireworks 1986

*Imperial Bedroom*, *Punch the Clock* [1983] and *Goodbye Cruel World* [1984] were the most Eighties-sounding records we ever allowed ourselves to make. We had some hits. We had some people come to the party, then we didn't like the party when the people came to the door. I started playing whole sets of songs that nobody – including the Attractions – wanted to hear. I just wanted to get out, and I did: I made *King of America*. The songs are more emotionally raw, and that more raw sound allows that to come through. Those were painful sessions with the Attractions as we were breaking up – on *Blood and Chocolate*, too. That was an ugly period where we made some great records. They come out of the tension.

## London's Brilliant Parade 1994

I wouldn't have known how to write those harmonies before *The Juliet Letters* [a 1993 strings-and-voice collaboration with the Brodsky Quartet]. That opened my head up – I can put these other bizarre chords in and it can still be a pop song. It's also the only thing I have ever tried to write about celebrating a place – and pointing out things that are not so beautiful about it. This was also one of the few songs where pulling the Attractions back together made any kind of sense. We couldn't have recorded it in the wound-up way we were before.

## When I Was Cruel No. 2 2002

The song is about accepting that there is a perception of you, and the music is backward-leaning and forward-leaning at the same time. I started out with all of these furious ideas, and people somehow feel it's a betrayal if you don't represent that all the time. But life is more complicated than that. There are sitting targets in the song, and the narrator is like, "I could have assassinated these people, but it's not worth it anymore" [laughs]. It's not worth what it takes out of your soul to go back down that road.

## The Puppet Has Cut His Strings

2013

It was at the end of the very long process of making *Wise Up Ghost*. It was these strange chords. Most of the songs on that album are outward-looking bulletins. I don't know why the music made me go there, but that night I wrote an account of my father's last days and hours. I wrote the lyrics in one draft and sang it in one take, into my computer on the kitchen counter. It's described in a way as clear as I can – the way music was my father's companion to his last breath. It's a somber conclusion. But why be afraid of it? 



**B**LUR WERE ONE OF THE most popular bands of the Nineties – everywhere except here in America, where most mainstream listeners know them as the “woo-hoo!” guys thanks to their lone U.S. hit, 1997’s “Song 2.” But their stateside reputation has grown over the years since their 2003 split, and this fall Blur (who returned with a strong new album, *The Magic Whip*, last spring) will play their biggest American non-festival gigs ever, at L.A.’s Hollywood Bowl and New York’s Madison Square Garden. Frontman Damon Albarn called from his London home to talk about why he both loves and hates getting back together with his old bandmates; his plans for a new album with his most successful non-Blur project, Gorillaz; and more. “I’m on my sofa, and I’ve just put dinner on for my family,” he says. “Hopefully, it will cook while we’re talking, and my multitasking genius will transcend this Tuesday evening.”

**2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Battle of Brit Pop, when Blur and Oasis were archrivals. Do you think all that competition was good for the music?**

It was definitely a lot of fun. We used the ghost of the Sixties to cover the skeleton of the modern age. It was a strange morphing, an interesting prototype time. A lot of the music from then has got a real atmosphere to it. Lyrically, I don’t think people write stuff like that anymore.

**You and Noel Gallagher have squashed the beef, right? Do you hang out much?**

Yeah, occasionally. I always enjoy his company. He’s hilarious.

**Do you listen to much new pop music? What’s the last great record you heard?**

I love [French-Cuban R&B duo] Ibeyi. I like lots of stuff, but I can’t think of the names.

**OK. Just to throw a name out there – what do you think of Kanye West?**

I think he’s pretty unique.

**How about Taylor Swift?**

Remarkable, but not unique. Anyone else? We can keep going.

**Drake?**

He’s not as consistent as he could be.

**Future?**

Really interesting, and sometimes exhilarating.

**Your *Alice in Wonderland* musical, *Wonderland*, is opening in London soon. What drew you to that material?**

*Alice in Wonderland* terrified me as a kid. I was very disturbed by the Duchess in particular. She figured in my nightmares. The musical is more

# Q&A



## Damon Albarn

The Brit-pop star on Blur’s big return, Nineties memories, David Cameron, Donald Trump and more

BY SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

about identity: It’s very easy to have multiple identities, to be sort of passively schizophrenic all the time, because of social media.

**Are you looking forward to playing Madison Square Garden with Blur?**

Is anyone going to come see it? I wonder. Will anyone bother?

**I’m going.**

Well, that’s one person, and I know a couple of other people who are coming too. So we’re looking at three, at least. But, yes, I’m excited. It’s something we dreamed about back in the early days – you’d hear of someone playing there and think, “Christ, that’d be something!” But we never did it.

**Do you enjoy playing with Blur now?**

I still try to avoid it like the plague, to be honest with you. But something weird happens once I’ve stepped onstage: I just have the best time. And then as soon as we get off, I say, “Never again.” It’s very strange.

**How come you try to avoid it?**

I don’t know. I sort of forget sometimes that I did all that work, all those years ago. But then we have such a fine time onstage – it has a very emotional undercurrent, but it’s also fun and silly and noisy. That’s a fantastic recipe, to have all of those elements colliding into each other.

**What else are you working on now?**

I’m in the very early days on a new Gorillaz record. So far, it’s really fast, and it’s got quite a lot of energy. I’ve been stuck on piano, somewhere off Broadway, for years now. I want to go somewhere completely opposite of that.

**What do you do with your leisure time if you’re not making music?**

If there’s a football game on, I’ll go to that. Or I’ll just go into the countryside and sit by the sea and cook and walk and do yoga and eat porridge. This week I’m going down to [Banksy’s Disneyland parody installation] Dismaland to meet some people there.

**Are you friends with Banksy?**

Yeah, I’ve known him since about the year 2000. A long time.

**What do you make of the tabloid story that alleges British Prime Minister David Cameron performed a sex act on a dead pig when he was in college?**

I wouldn’t trust those politicians. But he’s cooler now that he’s admitted he smoked a bit of dope than he was before – that hasn’t done him any harm, has it?

**What about American politics? Any thoughts on Donald Trump?**

Hmm. Maybe we could get him to do “Parklife” with us!



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## The Rebirth of 'The Evil Dead'

The horror classic gets (another) reboot

**W**HEN IT WAS FIRST released, in 1981, director Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* opened in only 15 theaters. But thanks to word of mouth, the gory low-budget horror film about five twentysomethings visiting a cabin, where some of them are possessed by demons, became a cult hit (Stephen King called it "ferociously original").

**ASH VS EVIL DEAD**  
SATURDAYS, 9 P.M., STARZ

Raimi eventually made two sequels, and he produced a reboot of the original film. He would go on to helm three *Spider-Man* movies. But people kept hounding him about his most beloved work. "Reporters would feign interest in whatever picture I was working on and then they'd say to me, 'When is the next *Evil Dead* coming out?'" he says.

Now *Evil Dead* is getting a fifth life as the TV series *Ash vs Evil Dead*, half-hour installments of the films'

mix of demonic carnage and *Three Stooges*-style "splat-stick" humor. Bruce Campbell, who played the films' chain-saw-wielding hero, returned to the role. This time, he's a fiftysomething stock boy who gets drunk and accidentally summons the same evil spirits that plagued him in the Eighties.

In order to lift his character's signature weapon again, Campbell, 57, grudgingly hit the gym. "If you've ever held up a chain saw, it's heavy," he says.

Campbell, who has signed at least 50 chain saws over the years, says Raimi was reluctant to give TV a try. But Starz assured the director he'd have free rein to make the show as gory as fans would hope. "There's so much blood," Campbell says. "I went blind the other day because of the blood. You never know when it's going to hit you." **KORY GROW**

**DEAD AGAIN**  
Bruce Campbell, fresh from the gym

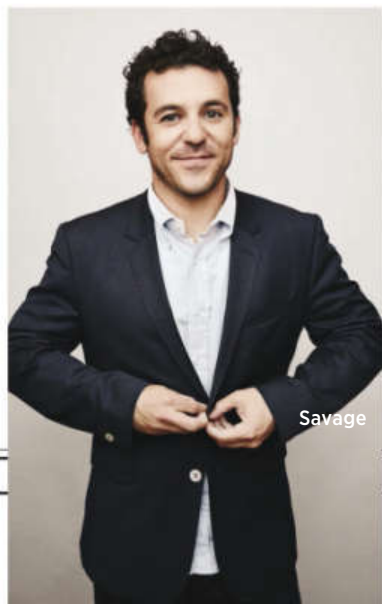
## Fred Savage's Wondrous Return to Acting

Ex-child star is finally back on TV with a new sitcom

As the chipmunk-cheeked star of *The Wonder Years*, Fred Savage grew up *Truman Show*-style: That Joe Cocker-sized kiss with Winnie was his first, too. But for the past decade, Savage, now 39, has been on the other side of the camera, directing and producing for the likes of *It's Always Sunny*

in *Philadelphia* and *Party Down*. So he's as surprised as anyone to find himself the co-star, opposite Rob Lowe, in Fox's new sitcom *The Grinder*—producers recruited him after watching other actors get "trampled" by Lowe's presence. "I didn't think I missed acting," says Savage. "But once I started to make people laugh, I enjoyed it." After *The Wonder Years* ended, in 1993, Sav-

age eschewed a meltdown in favor of majoring in English at Stanford. His own kids have become *Wonder Years* fans, and it freaks him out that an equivalent show would now be set in 1995. "1968 was 20 years before 1988, and, shit, that feels like a much bigger reach," he says. "But my oldest is nine years old and he looks at the Nineties as some ancient time." **BRIAN HIATT**



Savage

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**YOU BETCHA**  
Danson and Wilson  
as small-town cops.

## 'Fargo' Masters the Midwestern Noir

More ambitious and deeper, the second season of the true-crime anthology reaches new highs

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

**M**INNESOTA, 1979: A MASSACRE at the Waffle Hut, three bodies riddled with bullets. Nobody knows why. This kind of crime isn't supposed to happen in a small town near South Dakota. In the local vets' hall, a cop talks it over with his buddies. One of them starts popping off – Nick Offerman, as a boozy vet ranting about JFK and RFK,

**FARGO** MONDAYS, 10 P.M., FX

with a Reagan campaign poster on the wall behind him. The cop says, "It's a diner robbery in Minnesota, Karl – not a presidential assassination." "Oh, sure," Offerman snorts. "That's how it starts, with something small – like a break-in at the Watergate Hotel. But just watch. This thing's only getting bigger."

Those words apply to *Fargo* too – the audacious and intense second season of FX's true-crime anthology series improves on the first installment in every detail. The first season achieved the damn-near-impossible task of taking off from the 1996 Coen brothers classic *Fargo* and telling a new story. The second chapter has a different narrative and a new cast – and the confidence level is through the roof. *Fargo* sets the scene with Fleetwood Mac's "Oh Well"

and a loop of 1970s images: Jimmy Carter, John Wayne Gacy, the Rev. Jim Jones, lines at gas stations. America's mood-ring setting is "bummed out," yet nobody realizes how much uglier it's going to get in the Eighties.

The cop at the center of the story is Patrick Wilson as Lou Solverson (played in Season One by Keith Carradine). Here, he's a Vietnam vet faced with a crime that nobody can explain. His father-in-law on the force is Ted Danson – instantly recognizable, but utterly different – gruff and stoic, with a mountain-man beard. Jesse Plemons is the palooka at the butcher shop, whose wife, Kirsten Dunst, has a few dark secrets. Jean Smart, the matriarch of a crime family, is trying to keep small-town organized crime alive, but the Kansas City mob wants in.

With its deep cast and eccentric rhythms, *Fargo* sketches out a fascinating portrait of America at the crossroads. When a local girl complains that she missed the Sixties, the gangster she's in bed with snickers. "The Seventies were always coming, like a hang-over," he says. "And you know what happened to Flower Rain Blossom? She's on methadone in Bismarck, turning tricks for breakfast meat." The country is changing so fast, these people on *Fargo* can't recognize it. But this thing's only getting bigger. 

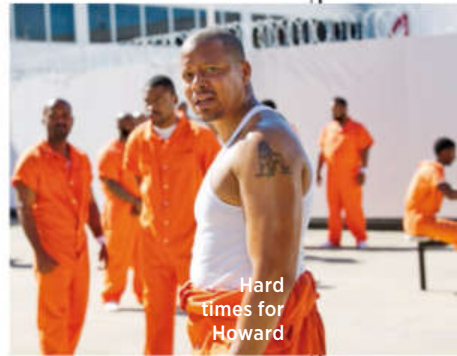
## Why 'Empire' Still Rules Prime Time

The hip-hop soap sets the drama to 11, and that's not a bad thing

*Empire* has stepped up the crazy this season with even more sex, money, drugs, music and murder – and that was exactly the right move to make. The hip-hop soap became the surprise blockbuster of

**EMPIRE** WEDNESDAYS,  
9 P.M., FOX

2015 last winter, as Terrence Howard's Lucious Lyon and his backstabbing ex-wife, Taraji P. Henson's Cookie, battled for control of the family business, along with their three sons. The new season starts with music mogul Lucious stewing in jail awaiting trial for murder, except his posh prison cell looks like a champagne room from a vintage Puffy video. While he's in lockdown,



Hard  
times for  
Howard

Cookie tries to consolidate her grip on his business. Last time, you never knew when you were getting jumped by the next absurd plot twist. This time around there's Chris Rock as a cannibal drug lord and Marisa Tomei as a lesbian billionaire wheeler-dealer, brilliantly named Mimi Whiteman. But nobody steals a scene from Cookie. When Lucious' ex-fiancee Anika sleeps with Whiteman to seal a deal and fails, Cookie splutters, "You can't even dyke right!" **R.S.**

FROM TOP: CHRIS LARGE/FX; CHUCK HODES/FOX

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# RandomNotes



## Taylor & Mick Get Ya-Ya's Out

Taylor Swift's 1989 tour has featured huge guest stars, from Steven Tyler to Justin Timberlake, but no one at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena was prepared when she welcomed "one of the greatest entertainers of all time – my friend Mick Jagger." Mick and Taylor powered through "Satisfaction," with Taylor showing off some wild new stage moves. Later, she simply tweeted, "Drops mic."



Vedder and Jay Z caught up backstage.

## Beyoncé & Friends Save the World!



Ed Sheeran joined Beyoncé for an unplugged "Drunk in Love."

"What a day this is!" Eddie Vedder said during Pearl Jam's set at the Global Citizen fest, which aims to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030. The Central Park bash included Michelle Obama, Coldplay and Beyoncé; Vedder told RS he was also there for the #62Million-Girls charity, which works to ensure girls "have access to 12 years of quality education."



## Gravy's Bayou Bud

"I feel so delightfully connected to this amazing man," says Wavy Gravy of old friend Mac Rebennack, a.k.a. Dr. John. The funky twosome got together for the Sound Summit, a benefit concert for picturesque Mount Tamalpais State Park in Marin County, California. As part of the "good rockin' fun," Gravy also welcomed the Tedeschi Trucks Band.



**POWER COUPLE** Cara Delevingne and Annie Clark of St. Vincent at the Burberry show at London Fashion Week. "Being in love with my girlfriend is a big part of why I'm so happy," said Clark earlier this year.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHN SHEARER/LPS/GETTY IMAGES FOR TAS; DANNY CLINCH; WALIK GOSHORN/RETNA LTD./MEDIA PUNCH; DAVID FISHER/REX SHUTTERSTOCK; © JAY BLAKESBERG





## Depp's Rock Monsters

These kids might have a future! Johnny Depp, Joe Perry (above) and frontman Alice Cooper played their third show ever under the name Hollywood Vampires at Brazil's massive Rock in Rio fest. "It was incredible!" says Perry of the set, which was almost entirely covers such as "Whole Lotta Love" and "School's Out." For Depp, the band has been a long time coming: "Music has been the driving force in everything I've done."



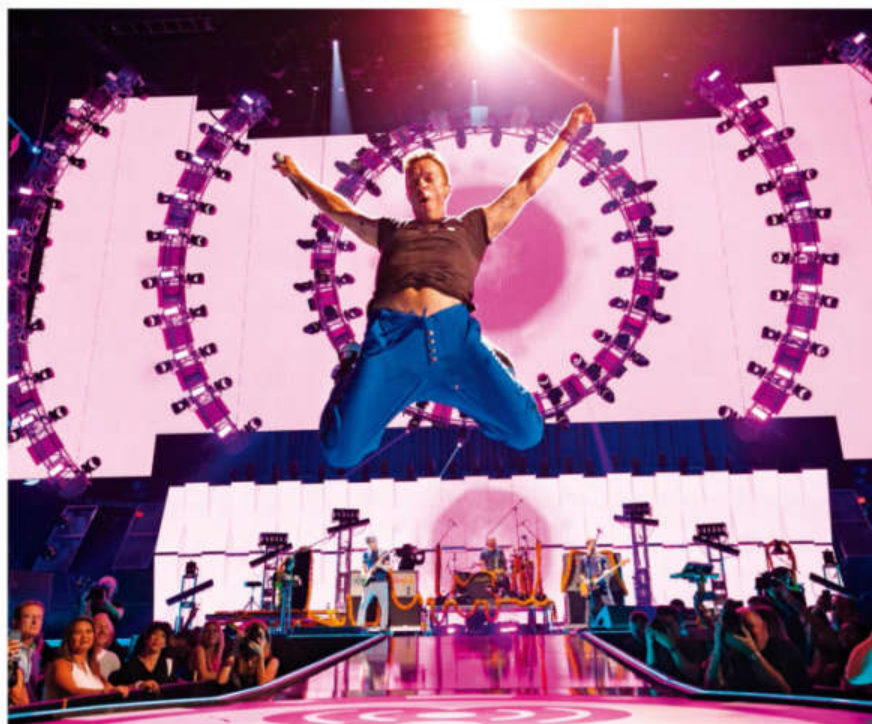
**SLIPPERY WHEN WET**  
Bleachers' Jack Antonoff jumped in the dunk tank at his Shadow of the City fest in Asbury Park, New Jersey: "I wanted to do something truly bizarre."



**SCHOOL OF ROCK** Slash made his first visit to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, where he took a picture of Chuck Berry's lyrics to "School Days." "I was impressed!" Slash says.



**RAMBLIN' MEN**  
Eric Church honored friend Gregg Allman at a tribute show in L.A.



## Coldplay Leap Back Into Action!

Coldplay have been off the road all year, but they showed they hadn't lost a step with a hit-packed set at Las Vegas' iHeartRadio fest. The band is working on its seventh LP, *A Head Full of Dreams*, which Chris Martin has hinted might be its last. "I don't have any calling after that," he said. But guitarist Jonny Buckland sounds skeptical: "Sometimes we change our minds."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: I HATE FLASH; GRIFFIN LOTZ; CHRISTOPHER POLK; WIREIMAGE; CARL HARP/ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



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# THERE WILL BE BLOOD

Inside the House Freedom Caucus, the ideological and uncompromising band of anti-government radicals who overthrew John Boehner. And they're just getting started

★ By Tim Dickinson ★

**T**HE REPUBLICAN CIVIL war has claimed its biggest casualty yet. The revolution that toppled John Boehner was carried out by a group of intransigent conservatives who had made the speaker of the House's job hell ever since the Tea Party wave of 2010 elevated him to power. It is only in recent months that this disruptive force in American politics even has a name: the House Freedom Caucus.

Composed of nearly 40 of the most committed ideologues in the House, the Freedom Caucus has a simple mission: to get GOP leadership to deliver on the extreme, anti-government and social-conservative rhetoric that nearly all Republicans spout to get elected.

Rep. Jeff Duncan, a member from South Carolina who played football at Clemson, insists the Freedom Caucus just wants to take the fight to the Democrats: "Republicans are in control of the House and the Senate – and it's about time we pass bills that reflect what Republicans stand for."

Eric Cantor, the former House majority leader, himself ousted by Tea Party forces in a primary last year, counters that House hard-liners just don't comprehend the GOP's strategic weakness, in the face of the Democratic filibuster and presidential veto: "I have never heard of a football team that won by throwing only Hail Mary passes," Cantor wrote following Boehner's ouster, "yet that is what is being demanded of Republican leaders today."

If you're not a close observer of Washington politics, the archetype of the Freedom Caucus member that's springing to mind right now is almost certainly wrong. New York Republican Rep. Peter King may have called Boehner's unseating "a victory for the crazies," but there's little lunatic about this fringe. The Freedom Caucus features whip-smart politicians who know how to tell it plain to the folks back home – but may prefer to keep their book-learning on the down-low. Take Rep. Tim Huelskamp. The third-term Kansan sports a buzz cut and a goatee and has the aw-shucks bearing of farmhand-gone-to-Washington. What he doesn't advertise is the political-science doctorate he earned at American University. "Please don't put this in the story," he says with a self-deprecating smile, "but my Ph.D. studies include public administration – organizational theory."

Other members include medical doctors, high-powered attorneys – even a former governor, Appalachian Trail hiker Mark Sanford. Though Southerners predominate, Freedom Caucus members come from all corners – 25 states in all – including New Mexico, Wyoming, Michigan and New Jersey. There's a fierce Southwestern streak: Four of Arizona's five Republican representatives are members.

Two Freedom Caucus members who played pivotal roles in ousting Speaker Boehner come from the Carolinas – and they dress like corporate CFOs. Tall and immaculately tailored, Rep. Mark Meadows looks like he should play himself in the Hollywood re-enactment of this drama. First elected to his rural

North Carolina district in 2012, Meadows has zero national profile. But in July, he introduced a measure to unseat the speaker – the first in more than a century – a move that wildly exceeded his goal of sparking a "family conversation" over Boehner's future.

The congressman who sealed the speaker's fate was Rep. Mick Mulvaney, a trim, clean-cut bulldog of a conservative who wears French cuffs and works at a standing desk. Mulvaney represents the same rural South Carolina district served by the fictional Frank Underwood in *House of Cards*.

During Congress' August recess, Mulvaney signed 31 right-wingers to an open letter committing to blocking funding of Planned Parenthood, which he claims trafficks in "dead-baby parts." And when Congress reconvened in September, the 48-year-old threw down the gauntlet to GOP leaders, demanding they put teeth behind their pro-life rhetoric: "Leadership is going to have to choose," he said. "Do they want it to be a talking point, or do they want to do something about it?"

In a House of 435 members, why would this small bloc of Republicans matter? Management of the chamber demands party discipline, and the speaker's agenda can be paralyzed by just 29 defections. By standing firm against Planned Parenthood, this gang of 31 signaled that the House GOP could not unite behind any budget bill that President Obama would actually sign. Mulvaney had set the clock ticking on another government shutdown – a time bomb that Boehner found he could only defuse by resigning.



**W** E MOST OFTEN THINK OF the Tea Party in opposition to the Obama presidency. In fact, the seeds of division in the modern GOP were sown late in the Bush administration. This anti-establishment movement was born of hard-right furor over GOP government intervention in the economy – including the bank and automaker bailouts – following years of K Street corruption and deficit-bloating social spending.

Freedom Caucus members define themselves less in opposition to Democrats than to “establishment” Republicans – politicians they see as quick to betray their voters, and subservient to K Street and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which represents big business in Washington. It’s a view articulated by their Senate co-conspirator, Ted Cruz of Texas, who inveighs against a “Washington Cartel” of “lobbyists and career politicians” that “favors giant corporations over taxpayers.”

Stocked with ex-jocks, the Freedom Caucus exudes a locker-room camaraderie. They speak in the argot of ESPN football announcers, blasting deceptive turns by GOP leadership as “trickerration” – as though they were describing a flea-flicker or a fake punt. Discussing legislative tactics, they’re more apt to cite Bill Belichick, the champion NFL coach, than Sam Rayburn, the legendary speaker from Texas. To plot their latest mischief, the caucus retreats to the basement of the Tortilla Coast, a three-star Yelp-rated Tex-Mex joint just off the Capitol grounds that serves up happy-hour mini-tacos, fried pickles and Bud Light on draft.

To understand these representatives, focus less on personality than on political circumstance. They serve blood-red districts – “homogenous echo chambers,” says Norman Ornstein, the American Enterprise Institute scholar who wrote the book on congressional dysfunction, *It’s Even Worse Than It Looks*.

Their districts are typically composed of far-flung suburbs, exurbs and rural communities, sometimes with a third- or fourth-tier city – Grand Rapids, Michigan – thrown in. Economically, these districts fare slightly better than average: Their voters are hanging on in the middle class but hardly thriving, with a median household income of \$54,000, just \$1,000 above average.

The defining characteristic of these districts is race – they are 83 percent white, or nearly 10 percentage points higher than the national average. That demography is reflected in the makeup of the Freedom Caucus itself. With the prominent exceptions of a woman named Cynthia and a man named Raúl, these are all white men.

The Freedom Caucus acts like a third party in Washington because the political fates of its members are not yoked to the national GOP. Their districts rate R+13, according to Cook Political Report



data crunched by ROLLING STONE. This means their districts vote 13 percent more Republican than the nation as a whole – and are nearly a third more partisan than the median GOP seat (R+10).

When election season rolls around, these politicians don't fear moderate Democrats – they are only threatened by even more right-wing Republicans in a primary fight. Instead of seeking to make inroads with Hispanics or independent women, their political imperative is to serve up red meat to furious constituents who say they want “their country back.”

Unaccountable to House leadership, these politicians respond to conservative pressure groups like Heritage Action – an offshoot of the Heritage Foundation.

**T**HE COMMANDER OF THE Freedom Caucus is Rep. Jim Jordan, whose rural Ohio district is gerrymandered into the shape of a pelican: The bill reaches into the outskirts of Cleveland, while the tail feathers ruffle up against Speaker Boehner's district in exurban Cincinnati.

Driving across Jordan's district – 89 percent white; R+9 – you go through idyllic cornfields dotted with red barns painted with American flags, and lush fields of soy with dystopian markers reading CROPLAN GENETICS. On the AM dial, listeners can flip between at least three stations carrying Rush Limbaugh. The road into Lima – pronounced like the bean – passes United States Plastic Corp., whose sprawling

why 65 percent of Republicans think Republican leadership is not doing what they said they were going to do?” he asked, citing a recent Pew poll. “Because we're not doing what we said we were going to do!”

Jordan is broad-shouldered and wiry, with thinning hair up top. He wears baggy dress shirts and speaks in rat-at-tat bursts. “You're the energy in American politics that's going to hold us accountable and force us to do what we campaigned on last fall, why you elected us, why you gave us back the Senate, and why you gave us the largest majority we've had in the House for 80 years,” he told the crowd. “It's never been more important that we stand up and fight.”

Jordan was a Tea Partier before the

## “I DON'T THINK 40 PEOPLE SHOULD BE IN THE POSITION OF BLACKMAILING 200 OF THEIR COLLEAGUES,” ONE GOP REP TELLS RS. “YOU CAN'T GOVERN THAT WAY.”

(Long a bastion of the establishment, Heritage is now run by reactionary ex-South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint, and is a beating heart of insurgency in Washington.) Running afoul of Heritage's metrics of right-wing purity is the quickest way to invite an electoral challenge. “They have score cards,” says Dick Durbin, the Senate's number-two Democrat. “It scares the bejesus out of Republicans: ‘Vote yes, vote no – or get ready, we're coming at you in the primary.’”

For Freedom Caucus members, careers in Washington are not defined by incremental legislative progress, but by a chest-beating performance of red-state identity. Winning is subordinate to fighting – a dynamic that leads members to reverse Ronald Reagan's famous admonition: “I'd rather get 80 percent of what I want than go over a cliff with my flags flying.”

headquarters is graced by a giant cross and a sign testifying: CHRIST IS THE ANSWER.

Lima is a hard-bitten Rust Belt city of 40,000; there is no Starbucks in town and the POW MIA flag flies in front of the county courthouse. The twin economic anchors are an oil refinery and the Joint Systems Manufacturing Center that rolls out Abrams tanks – a weapon that Army Gen. Ray Odierno insists “we don't need,” but Congress keeps funding anyway, to the tune of \$120 million in 2015 alone.

In June, Heritage Action honored Jordan on the Lima campus of Northeastern Ohio University for scoring 90 percent on its exacting score card. “It's hard to believe an organization as fine as Heritage could be wrong 10 percent of the time,” Jordan joked to dozens of local Heritage activists. He then played a numbers game against members of his own party. “Do you know

moniker was minted. First elected in 2008, he rose to command the Republican Study Committee – at the time, the most conservative caucus in the House. When the influx of ideological Tea Party freshmen arrived in 2010, Jordan picked off dozens disenchanted with establishment leadership to build the forces he'd lead into battle against Boehner.

Jordan's competitive fire was kindled during his career as a wrestler; he racked up four high school championships in Ohio and two NCAA titles at Wisconsin. Diminutive – he wrestled at 134 pounds – the 51-year-old hasn't lost his athletic build. A wrestling fan I met after a town-hall meeting in corn country told me, “He looks like he could still go.”

Jordan isn't a natural politician. He's too wonky – like a less-polished version of Paul Ryan – with a habit of making his

### THREAT ASSESSMENT THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY

**WITH US**

- Scott Walker** bows out of presidential race.
- Hillary** comes out against Keystone XL.
- Ahmed** the clock builder
- Pope champions climate action on U.S. visit.
- “Gay” Doritos
- Snoop** launches marijuana portal: MerryJane.com.
- “Happy Birthday to You” no longer protected by copyright.
- NASA:** evidence of liquid water on Mars.



**CHANGING OF THE GUARD**  
House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy with John Boehner

hands into the vectors of the line graph that he's trying to describe to constituents. But back in Washington, Jordan is a master of political leverage.

For a conventional politician, leading a bloc of 40 backbenchers, plus a dollar, gets you a cup of coffee. But Jordan's command of House rules empowers him to run unconventional plays – thrusting his right-wing bloc to the center of the most contentious policy debates in Washington.

Jordan embraces obstruction. And he has perfected the House equivalent of a filibuster. In a procedural wrinkle you don't learn about in civics class, bringing major legislation to the House floor first requires passage of a procedural "rule." These are party-line votes – these days, Republicans only – and historically perfunctory.

Jordan and his cohorts have found power in refusing to back these tallies – denying their speaker the 218 votes needed to tee up his agenda. Jordan's gang leveraged this tactic to stymie Boehner's plan to fund the government in 2013 – sparking a feckless two-week shutdown over Obamacare

that cost the economy \$24 billion. Last December, they came within a single vote of derailing the "Cromnibus" budget bill. And they were at it again in the Planned Parenthood fight: Mulvaney's open letter telegraphed to Boehner that he would not have the party-line votes to move a "clean" funding bill to the floor.

Ironically, Boehner had already been bending over backward to honor House conservatives, observing the "Hastert Rule" – by which only bills with the support of the majority of the GOP conference advance to the floor. Freedom Caucus obstruction of rule votes ratchets this bar even higher, blocking bills not backed by 218 of 247 members – or 88 percent.

The backbench rebellions that bedeviled Boehner are a new feature of American politics. In the recent past, Republicans fell in line because party leaders had carrots – OK, pork – and sticks: the threat of cutting off fundraising. "There were always conservative members and conservative districts," says a GOP consultant to a prominent presidential candidate. "But

the incentives were different: You had to curry favor with leadership, so you were willing to compromise."

Today, the incentives are missing – or reversed. Leaders have no earmarks to bribe intransigent lawmakers. And conservatives who buck the establishment are rewarded by ideological Super PACs like the Club for Growth. If a representative is committed to disruption, the GOP consultant says, "What power does anybody in leadership have to move them off of that position? There isn't any."

The frustration among old-school House GOPs is visceral. Deputy Whip Tom Cole of Oklahoma likens the Freedom Caucus' tactics to extortion: "I don't think 40 people should be in the position of blackmailing 200 of their colleagues who hold a different view," Cole tells *ROLLING STONE*. "You can't govern this place that way."

But politically, Freedom Caucus obstruction works, because it plays with the base back home. Take it from Virginia Rep. Dave Brat, the bespectacled economics professor who pulled off the biggest upset in congressional history last year by defeating majority leader Cantor in a primary.

"The idea that we're not on the team is false," says Brat, who has found a home in Jordan's fold. "We're the conservatives! We're the very heart of the Republican Party that's trying to represent the American people."

**T**HE NEXUS OF POWER FOR THE House Freedom Caucus is a high perch of the Longworth House of office building – a redoubt for backbenchers, far from the gold leaf and bas-relief of the Capitol – where Jordan and Rep. Raúl Labrador of Idaho hold neighboring offices.

When I arrive at Labrador's office, Jordan is just leaving, accompanied by Congressman Meadows. Since his 2012 elec-



Pizza rat

Sexy Donald Trump Halloween costumes

David Cameron's initiation rites

California snowpack hits 500-year low.

Volkswagen admits emissions fraud affecting 11 million cars.

Ben Carson: Muslims shouldn't be president.

Hedge-fund pharma bro

Putin bombs Syria.



tion, Meadows has been nothing but trouble for Boehner. In the 2013 shutdown fight, it was Meadows who played the instigator, circulating an open letter demanding the defunding of Obamacare.

In a sweltering week in June, Meadows had been the target of Boehner's wrath, stripped of a subcommittee chairmanship for refusing to back a rule vote. But just hours after this powwow in Labrador's office, Meadows would get his gavel back. Jordan and his deputies discovered a wrinkle in the House rule book that empowers a majority of committee members – in this case, held by Tea Partiers – to overrule a decision by leadership. This reversal was more than embarrassing for Boehner – it sparked Meadows' retaliation in late July, a historic motion to "vacate the chair," accusing the speaker of abusing the "power of the office to punish members who vote according to their conscience."

Jordan will size up reporters with a wary smile and an alpha handshake. Labrador, his top lieutenant, is gregarious, rumpled and far less guarded. Labrador comes by his small-government ideology

trusting the competence of Boehner and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy to Nancy Pelosi, Labrador insists, "She's smarter than our leaders." He lets those treasonable words hang in the air for a moment before taking the same swipe at Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell: "And so is Harry Reid."

In his unvarnished attacks on GOP leadership, Labrador echoes Cruz, the Texan who led the 2013 government-shutdown fight from the upper chamber. The senator's sway with the Tortilla Coast gang has led even top House Democrats to dub him "Speaker Cruz."

Cruz is an imperfect populist. A silver-tongued Princeton debater and Harvard-educated superlawyer, he is married to a Goldman Sachs banker. His bread has been buttered by the same Wall Street bailouts he denounces. Cruz's political patron is a billionaire hedge-fund manager, Robert Mercer, whose firm has been accused by the Senate of \$6 billion in tax avoidance – casting a less virtuous light on the senator's campaign to "abolish the IRS."

McConnell is no liberal – he believes companies are having a hard time finding workers because America's poor are "doing too good with food stamps." But he is a master politico: never one to let rigid ideology stand in the way of cutting a deal.

In conservative ranks, McConnell is also despised for the campaign he waged in 2014 to de-Tea Partify the Senate. Over several elections, the Senate GOP had been drifting to the hard right, largely because establishment money sat out primary elections. This left reactionary groups like the Senate Conservatives Fund, founded by DeMint, to have a field day. DeMint's network launched some of the most recognizable names in modern politics – including senators Cruz, Marco Rubio of Florida and Rand Paul of Kentucky. But SCF also cost the GOP as many as six winnable seats by backing unelectable wingnuts like former witchcraft dabbler Christine O'Donnell of Delaware.

McConnell set out to deny SCF "a single nominee anywhere in the country," vowing to "crush them everywhere." To aid this campaign, American Crossroads and the

## “WE’RE THE CONSERVATIVES!” SAYS ONE OF THE GOP REBELS. “WE’RE THE HEART OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY THAT’S TRYING TO REPRESENT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.”

honestly; he was raised by a single mother in Puerto Rico, who instilled in him a bootstrapping sense of self-reliance. "My mom never used welfare because she believed welfare was destructive to the soul," he says. "I became a Republican because of that."

The purpose of the Freedom Caucus, Labrador says, is to hold party leadership's feet to the fire of the activist base. All Republicans – establishment and insurgent alike – vow they'll combat "out of control" government spending, fight for small business and stand tall for conservative social values. But the Tea Party congressmen are convinced that few members of the GOP are truly committed. "Once they get here," Labrador says, "they reject those things."

Labrador views his establishment colleagues as corrupt – selling out small-government principles for PAC donations – or, at best, mindless: "Any monkey can do what we do here, if all we're going to do is what our leadership tells us to do." He isn't bothered by being labeled an obstructionist: "When we stop bad legislation, it's just as functional as when you pass good legislation." And he couldn't care less if you think he's not a GOP team player: "I came here to represent my constituents," he tells *ROLLING STONE*, "not the party."

Get Labrador rolling, and he reveals open contempt for GOP leadership: Con-

But Cruz connects with the Tea Party in his denunciation of the Kabuki theater of the GOP establishment – wherein the party stages "show votes" of opposition to appease the party base, while stage-managing a process in which Obamacare gets funded or the debt ceiling rises.

Cruz doesn't see pragmatism in GOP leaders' refusal to pull out all the stops to advance a conservative agenda. He sees cowardice and an ulterior agenda – to conserve political capital to keep the party's corporate patrons well tended.

Cruz's frustration with GOP leadership boiled over in July when he denounced McConnell, on the Senate floor, as a "flat-out" liar who cuts "corrupt" deals while running a "government of the lobbyists, by the lobbyists and for the lobbyists."

Freedom Caucus members share Cruz's hatred of the Senate leader – whose first name they practically spit as they say it. "Mitch McConnell is infinitely worse as a leader than Boehner," said Rep. Matt Salmon of Arizona. "He surrenders at the sight of battle every time."

McConnell's establishment ties run deep. He's raised \$80 million in campaign cash since his election to the Senate in 1984. His wife was a member of George W. Bush's Cabinet. And the Super PAC of the establishment, American Crossroads, is run by his former chief of staff.

Chamber of Commerce plowed more than \$20 million into Senate primary fights.

SCF, and allied groups like the Club for Growth were primed for battle – and even took the fight to McConnell. SCF spent nearly \$800,000 on attack ads against the majority leader. But McConnell's powerful friends had his back: The chamber itself invested \$1 million to support the Republican leader.

In the end, it wasn't much of a fight. McConnell trounced his primary challenger by 24 points. Similar results held across the country, even in places like Oklahoma and Mississippi, as one after another of SCF's candidates were defeated. The group's president, Ken Cuccinelli, seethed: "The establishment showed us... that they're willing to betray their own voters and tear the GOP apart to hold on to power."

**E**LECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES. And the establishment-dominated 114th Congress shot out of the gates to advance legislation favored by the Chamber of Commerce and other powerful special interests.

McConnell and Boehner overhauled Medicare to boost doctor pay – a top priority of the American Medical Association, which spent \$20 million in lobbying last year. For a party that crusades against

deficits, the 10-year deal was a major disconnect, racking up \$140 billion in red ink.

In a heroic lift on behalf of corporate America, Boehner and McConnell rescued a divisive trade package – greasing the skids for a Pacific Rim free-trade deal expected to impact 40 percent of global GDP. Most infuriating to the Tea Party base, Republican leaders ducked a showdown over Obama’s “executive amnesty,” instead fully funding the Department of Homeland Security and the myriad contractors in its orbit.

With each snap of the ball, Freedom Caucus members blitzed the speaker. But Boehner stiff-armed his right flank, instead collaborating with pro-business Democrats to move legislation to the president’s desk. During the trade deal, Boehner even embraced eight turncoat Democrats who joined with Republican moderates to break a Freedom Caucus filibuster and pass a rule vote.

“There are a lot of folks in our conference who have a very difficult time getting to ‘yes’ on anything,” says Rep. Charlie Dent, a crisply tailored moderate representing Allentown, Pennsylvania. Dent leads a gang of center-right Republicans known as the Tuesday Group that supported Boehner’s leadership. As Dent sees it, today’s GOP is split between a “governance wing” and a “rejectionist wing.” And the governance wing has no choice but to work with Democrats. “On any issue of great consequence around here, we on the Republican side don’t have 218 votes for a bathroom break! So we always need a bipartisan coalition.”

The House’s brief bout of harmony made K Street happy. Marc Lampkin, a Boehner-deputy-turned-lobbyist, told *The Hill* this summer, “Corporations are a lot more optimistic about whether to invest in Washington.” The Chamber of Commerce, too, was pleased. “Our leaders in Washington,” said the group’s CEO, “proved they could tune out the populists and demagogues.”

Through a darker lens, the “populists and demagogues” saw the same state of play in Washington. “The Chamber is winning, the people are losing,” Rep. Labrador told *Rolling Stone*. “They paid a lot of money for those votes.”

But at least one (now-former) Freedom Caucus member saw self-destruction in the actions of his compatriots. Rep. Tom McClintock, the lone Californian in the group, resigned in September – writing

in an open letter to Jordan that the caucus’ intransigence had “thwarted vital conservative policy objectives.” By making themselves a roadblock on the right, McClintock wrote, they gave Boehner no option but to tack left, empowering Democrats to shape legislation. The Freedom Caucus, he concluded, had “unwittingly become Nancy Pelosi’s tactical ally.”



#### THE OBSTRUCTIONISTS

Led by former college wrestling champ Rep. Jim Jordan, Ohio (1), the Freedom Caucus has mastered parliamentary chicanery to block legislation. Members include: (2) Raúl Labrador, Idaho, (3) Mark Meadows, N.C., (4) Jeff Duncan, S.C., and (5) David Brat, Va.

**T**HE TOXIC REPUBLICAN DYNAMIC in the House has no immediate fix. Boehner’s likely replacement, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, is already drawing fire from the right. Radio host Mark Levin blasted him as “Eric Cantor with 10 less IQ points” – a take echoed by Labrador: “Cantor, I thought, was a better leader.”

Nor does it change the clash of political imperatives that divides House and Senate Republicans. During the Planned Parenthood standoff, McConnell bristled at the incompetence of House insurgents for demanding an “exercise in futility.”

If Tea Partiers look at politics like football, McConnell thinks like a chess play-

er; he sees no purpose in reckless attacks his opponent will easily foil. McConnell is plotting a long game – seeking to preserve GOP control of Congress and gain the presidency. He believes the 2016 election can open a window for the Republicans – like President Obama enjoyed in the first two years of his presidency – when bold GOP initiatives could become realistic, including defunding Planned Parenthood.

But to build to that moment of political power, the GOP must first defend Senate seats in places like Pennsylvania and New Hampshire. Unlike Freedom Caucus members, these Republicans can’t go full Trump on every issue and expect to be re-elected in 2016.

The danger to the rest of us is much closer at hand. The budget measure passed in September is temporary – expiring in December, just as the federal government is forecast to hit the debt ceiling. This raises the specter of a Christmas only a Scrooge could love: with Washington shuttered and the nation defaulting on our debts.

Over the horizon, it’s not difficult to imagine how the establishment GOP solves its Freedom Caucus problem – by coming at these obstructionists with guns blazing. The Chamber of Commerce has vowed it will avenge Boehner by targeting uncooperative GOP House incumbents in the 2016 primaries, seeking to repeat its success of pacifying the GOP Senate. The establishment doesn’t require total victory; it just needs to flip enough seats to assure the next Republican speaker a lockstep 218-vote majority.

But in the near term, America should brace for chaos – with Republican infighting jeopardizing not only the nation’s credit, but

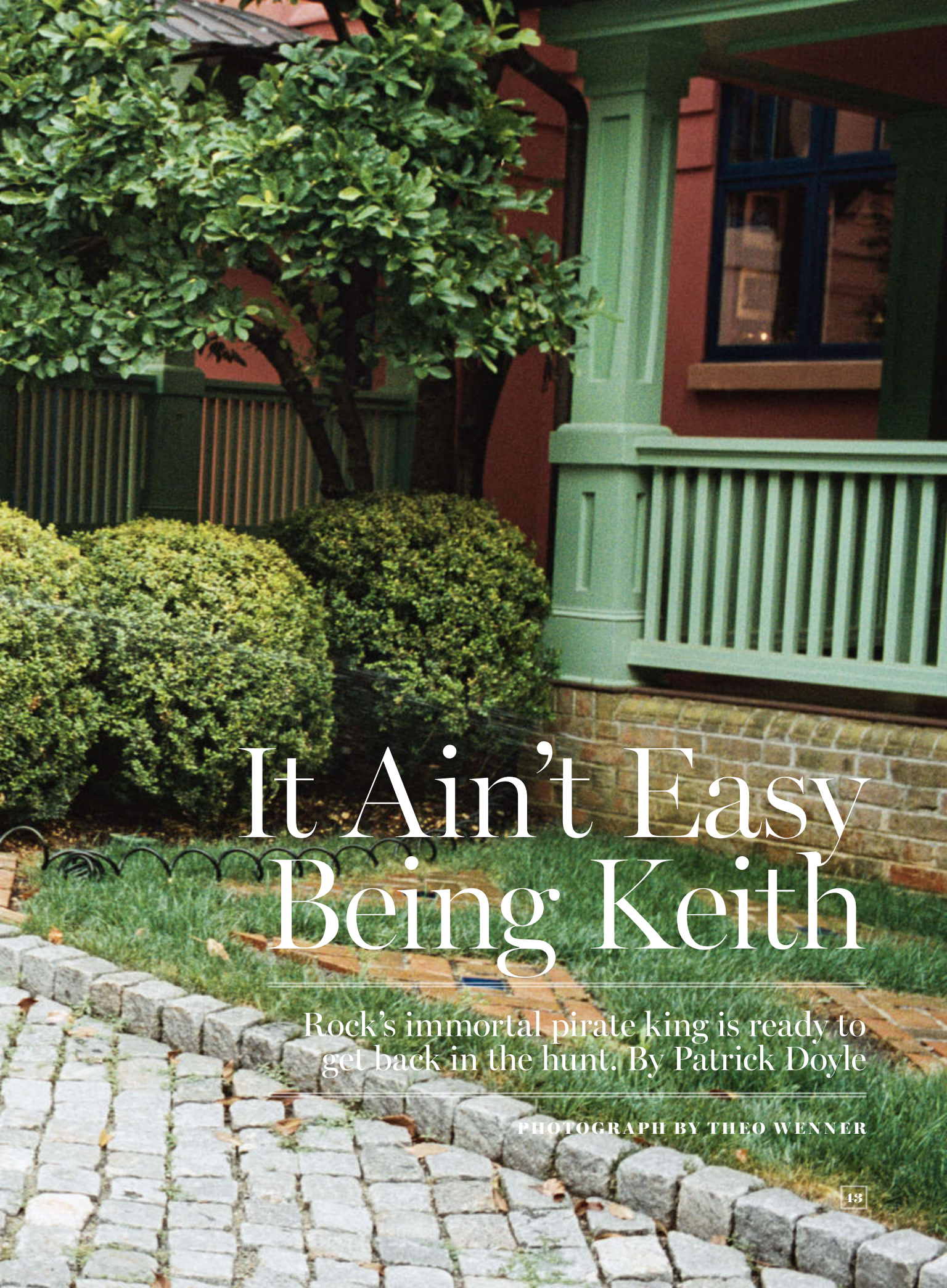
funding for our roads and bridges, our veterans and the most vulnerable among us. Boehner was a unique politician: the son of a barback, most at ease at the country club. “He had unique skills bridging irreconcilable groups of Republicans and averting utter disaster,” says Ornstein, the congressional scholar. “Nobody else, starting with Kevin McCarthy, has the ability to do it.” The Freedom Caucus members have been emboldened by their coup, and anti-establishment presidential candidates will egg them on. This tiny band of radicals – who have built careers on hatred of government – won’t be deterred until they’ve shaken the very foundation of the people’s House.





Richards at  
his home in  
Connecticut  
in July





# It Ain't Easy Being Keith

Rock's immortal pirate king is ready to  
get back in the hunt. By Patrick Doyle

PHOTOGRAPH BY THEO WENNER



‘T

HEY'RE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES AWAY," says Hervé, the mustachioed owner of Luc's, a French bistro tucked away in a back alley in the Norman Rockwell-esque town of Ridgefield, Connecticut. Customers are gently told that the front patio is closed. The restaurant's music changes, from classical to Toots and the Maytals' "Pressure Drop."

At exactly 3 p.m., Keith Richards steps out of a chauffeured black Mercedes sedan. (Despite what you might think, Richards is usually punctual to a fault.) He looks off-duty in a brown leather jacket, aviators and black Uggs; he's missing his usual bandanna and the piratical fishhooks that often adorn his hair. A sandalwood aroma follows him (his friend Tom Waits says he smells like a "campfire").

Richards, 71, has just come off the road with the Rolling Stones, who finished their latest U.S. stadium run a month ago, and is taking advantage of the break between tours to release his new solo album, *Crosseyed Heart*. He steps inside to chat with the bartender. Then he greets a pair of teenage boys at a patio table, kissing them on the head; they hug him reverently – it looks like a scene out of *The Godfather*. It turns out the boys are Hervé's sons, and Hervé is married to the niece of Richards' wife, Patti Hansen. "I call him my French nephew," Richards says with a laugh, finally taking a seat out front and lighting up one of many Marlboro Reds. "It's a family affair. They've been here for 15 years, and it's become one of the most popular French bistros in New England. And it happens to be my local hang."

Hervé's wife, a friendly blond woman named Marissa, brings over some french fries. "Thanks, darling," Richards says, but he doesn't touch them. (He often doesn't eat when he goes to restaurants, even when he's dining out with his family; instead, he'll cook himself some chicken or bangers and mash later that evening.)

He lives about 15 minutes away, in a sprawling, Italian-style villa with a tennis court and a guesthouse, sitting next to a 1,700-acre nature preserve. Visitors are greeted by two French bulldogs; the walls

are full of photos from Stones tours. He's been in Connecticut since the late Eighties, after his daughters Alexandra and Theodora were born. Richards and Hansen were living in Manhattan's East Village, which lacked green space and held some less-than-domestic associations for him. "On the odd occasion there was a [heroin] drought in the Seventies," he remembers, "we'd have to go down the East Side and carry a shooter. Just in case."

"A year or two after they were born, I said, 'I can't bring the kids up on Fourth Street,'" he says. "Not when there's fresh air and some countryside not far away. It's not called New England for nothing – a lot of it reminds me very much of parts of England, of Sussex or Surrey."

At home, he will play Mexican dominoes or watch the History Channel or cable news – which often makes him angry, like when he saw James Blake getting tackled by a cop. "Another pointer that you can't get rid of racism with the stroke of a pen," says Richards. He also followed the protests in Baltimore and Ferguson: "Cops used to slap you around the ear and send you home. Now they shoot you." He has a large home library and is currently reading a book about rogue Napoleonic-era sea captain Thomas Cochrane. Richards is a naval-history buff: He told his biographer, James Fox, to read Patrick O'Brian's *Master and Commander*, a historical novel set on a British ship in 1800, to better understand his "friendship and adversity" with Mick Jagger. ("He felt it was something that explained his sadness," says Fox.)

On any given day, Richards might fax a couple of notes to his longtime guitar tech, Pierre de Beauport, asking him to investigate an uncredited Little Richard guitarist named Rudy Richard or an obscure reggae record. Richards will watch new movies that come in the mail, and walk around the house playing an acoustic guitar. "If the Old Lady says, 'That's nice,'" he says, "I'll follow it up."

He orders a vodka-soda. As the waiter walks away, Richards speaks up: "Double 'em!"

Lately, he has been recovering from a painful injury, which he's been keeping secret. At the July 4th show in Indianapolis, he was running down the catwalk toward the stage during the sax solo of "Miss You" and tripped face-forward. "Somebody tossed a red straw boater hat, and it landed right in front of my feet," he says. "I kicked it aside – 'All right, that's out

the way' – and it fucking bounced back in front of me, and I hit the floor. And suddenly, I'm on my hands and knees in front of 60,000 people, you know? My bracelet came off from the shock. It was, 'OK, get out of this one, pal!'

"I might've cracked a rib," he says, placing his hand on his right side. "There's nothing doctors can do about it. I thought, 'Shit, if I let them know how much I'm hurting, the doctors and the insurance companies will be like, 'Cancel the next gigs.' Fuck it. I'll live with it. After 50 years on the stage, you're going to fall over occasionally and take a knock.'"

It's a classic Richards story – the close scrape and the getaway. His career is full of those stories, whether it's the mayor of Boston personally bailing him and Jagger out of jail to play a 1972 show, or Richards dodging a possible seven-year heroin-trafficking sentence by agreeing to play a concert for the blind. (Pete Townshend has said the Stones have "a sinister reputation for miracles.") But Richards' greatest getaway is the sheer fact of his physical survival – that he's lived faster than anybody and yet failed to die young, or, indeed, at all. His uncanny resilience first became part of the cultural lore in the 1970s, when U.K. rock magazine *New Musical Express* voted him

"Most Likely to Die" for 10 years in a row. These days, his apparent immortality has become an Internet meme: One joke goes, "For every cigarette you smoke, God takes an hour away from your life and gives it to Keith Richards"; another goes, "We need to start worrying about what kind of world we are going to leave for Keith Richards."

But there's no disputing what Richards has left us: He's the guy who helped bring the blues to white America, who has given us some of the greatest ballads of all time ("Ruby Tuesday," "Wild Horses") and the most menacing anthems ("Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Midnight Ram- bler"). Richards invented a heavily rhythmic, sometimes droning guitar style – strange tunings, almost no solos – that stumps even his heroes. "I try to copy stuff from him, and I can't get it, man," says Buddy Guy. "And I've been trying ever since I met him." With his low-slung guitar cool, Richards helped define the very idea of what a rock star is to every generation that followed. He has taken note of this fact: "I'm glad you like the hairdo and the outfits, boys," he says of the thousands of guitarists who look like him. "I always take it as a compliment."

Associate editor PATRICK DOYLE wrote about Aretha Franklin last December.



**R**ICHARDS NEEDED EVERY bit of his iron constitution in February 2006, when he slipped while jumping off a seven-foot-high branch on vacation in Fiji, slamming his head on a tree trunk. Two days later, he suffered two seizures and was flown to Auckland, New Zealand, where surgeons removed a blood clot from the surface of his brain. He was told he shouldn't work for six months, but he was back on the road in six weeks, taking Dilantin, an anti-seizure medication with side effects that can include confusion and decreased coordination (which he still takes). Richards' team was terrified he was going to fall during a show; reviews were not kind to his playing. "You could make the argument that he was clouded," says de Beaufort.

The fog lasted well after the tour ended. "I think that bang on the head, that did quite a bit more damage [than people thought]," Richards says. "You take a blow like that, you kind of feel stunned for another year or two afterward, really. You know, you suddenly realize you've been semiconscious."

The Stones went on a long break. Richards stopped playing guitar and turned his attention to writing his autobiography, *Life*, spending hundreds of hours with author Fox at Richards' home in Turks and Caicos. The darker parts of the writing process – delving into his decade-long heroin addiction, which ended in 1978, and the death of his two-month-old son in 1976 – was very, very difficult for him," says Fox. "He touched on these very sad things that sort of still haunt him, and it visibly affected him at the time. We had

#### LIVE WITH ME

From left: Hansen; daughters Angela and Alexandra; son Marlon's wife, Lucie; grandson Orson; daughter Theodora; Richards; Marlon; and granddaughters Ida and Ella in Turks and Caicos in 2010.

to go very gingerly. Keith's way was to give himself a bottle, give himself protection, to create this kind of boundary so that you can go on creating inside it. I think he denied all this stuff with the help of lots of substances for a very long time."

"[The book] drained more out of me than I had thought," says Richards. "I can play two Stones shows a day and I'm OK, you know? But the prolonged research, and your whole life is coming back in front of you – oh, man." Richards was highly critical of Jagger, describing a friendship soured by business, ego and old grudges, and the two didn't speak for months.

*Life* topped *The New York Times'* best-seller list, and it won a Norman Mailer Award. But the irony was not lost on Richards that his biggest hit in years was not a piece of music. "You make the best records you can for 50 years," he says, "and suddenly, a book..." With the Stones on hiatus, Richards told friend Steve Jordan – who had played drums and written with him in his Eighties side project the X-Pensive Winos – that he might retire from music. "I thought the book might be the crowning glory," Richards says. "I just hit one of those points. Do you have anything more to say?

Can you still get the guys to do it? Because I'm useless without a gang."

Jordan persuaded Richards to play at New York's One East studio once a week – just guitar and drums – to keep Richards' chops up. "We had a blast," says Jordan. "He would just start digging through his memory bank for some stuff, then we would jam and just start rocking." The results would evolve into *Crosseyed Heart*: Working much like Richards and Charlie Watts did when they recorded early versions of "Jumpin' Jack Flash" and "Street Fighting Man" alone in the studio, Richards recorded guitar, bass and piano tracks all by himself. One of the songs he and Jordan recorded, "Trouble," may be Richards' most joyous rocker since "Before They Make Me Run." "Blues in the Morning" is a revved-up tribute to Chuck Berry, with a powerful sax solo by late Stones alum Bobby Keys. "It's the most straight-ahead rock & roll you can get," says Richards.

On the gospel-tinged ballad "Just a Gift," Richards writes a letter to someone he's trying to reconnect with: "If you want and feel a need to call... my address hasn't changed at all, and I'm still the same." Richards has never been afraid to write about Jagger, so I ask if this is one of those songs. "You know, that's a good thought," he says. "When you're writing love songs, you're really thinking about a chick. But then again, the Rolling Stones is my wife!"

People who visited Richards in the studio were struck by his good mood. "We'd order pizza at night for the crew," says Morgan Neville, who directed the new Netflix documentary *Keith Richards: Under the Influence*. "Everybody would be



crammed in this tiny control room – like, 15 of us. And Keith would sit on the couch with such a grin on his face. He just wanted to be in the mix. He laughed nonstop.”

The last time Richards formed a side band during a falling out with Jagger – the X-Pensive Winos – was much wilder. Guitarist Waddy Wachtel remembers the Winos staying in a house in Toronto and stumbling downstairs one morning: “We’d been up until God knows when. I had just gotten out of bed. I was sitting there, and all of a sudden, behind me, I hear ice cubes hitting a glass. And it’s Keith, making his first drink. He said, ‘You want a drink?’ I said, ‘No, I don’t want a fucking drink! I can still taste the vodka in my mouth from last night!’ It gave me a chill.”

Wachtel remembers one Thanksgiving with Richards in the late Eighties: “We had bourbon and ice. That was dinner.” Wachtel saw it as progress when he and the band were able to get Richards to switch from bourbon to vodka. “At least he didn’t have all that sugar making his brain insane,” says Wachtel. “He could get in a dark place.” When the session guitarist showed up for *Crossed Heart*, he was surprised and happy to see Richards actually *eating*. “We’d never done that before,” says Wachtel.

Richards still has a temper. Fox remembers leaving a Turks and Caicos bar with him when a local kid ran up to him with an iPhone, telling him to listen to his band. “Keith just turned on him like a barracuda and said, ‘Fuck off!’ And he deserved it because there were no manners, there was nothing. It was justified. But it certainly wasn’t the response the kid was expecting, if you can imagine.”

But Richards “is in a better place than he was even 10 years ago,” says Wachtel. “He just had a big smile on his face.”

**L**AST YEAR, RICHARDS PUBLISHED another book, *Gus & Me*, a children’s tale about how his grandfather taught him to play classical guitar. “Gus never forced anything on me,” says Richards, sipping his second vodka- tonic. “He just suggested, or dangled things. Like the guitar, which hung on the wall. ‘When you can reach it, you can have it.’”

Now, Richards has five grandchildren of his own, ages one to 19, all of whom he sees regularly. “It’s not the first thing you think of in life: ‘I wonder what I’ll be like as a grandfather?’” he says. “But once it happens, there’s a certain relationship, that distance between parent and grand-

parent, which sometimes can be very, very useful and very inspiring. A couple of my grandsons, all they want to do is go on the road with me now.” He laughs. “Well, maybe this isn’t the best idea.” One of them is Orson, who is 15 and looks like a young Keith, except with blond hair. “He likes to hang with me, but he’s got to go

Berry, Little Richard and Fats Domino are in their eighties and Lewis is on his farewell tour, the Stones will soon be the elder statesmen on the road. “Don’t remind me!” Richards says, covering his face with his hands. “I never thought I’d get this far. Now, I have to think about this and wonder what to do with it. I don’t know, man.

There’s always been the cats in front of me. This is the thing, with evolving. It’s my turn for growing old.”

The conversation turns to the British Invasion bands that followed the Stones. “I just was never really interested in that many English rock & roll bands, at all,” says Richards. “I usually like guys like Johnny Kidd and the Pirates, and that was before I was even recording. The Yeses and the Journeys and them left me a bit cold.”

Richards “loves Jimmy Page” but isn’t a Led Zeppelin guy. “As a band, no, with John Bonham thundering down the highway in an uncontrolled 18-wheeler. Jimmy is a brilliant player. But I always felt there was something a little hollow about it.” Richards actually prefers Robert Plant’s solo work, particularly his album with Alison Krauss. “I heard that and thought, ‘Finally, he’s getting his chops!’”

Richards pauses – “I don’t want it coming out like...” – then smiles and continues: “I always thought [Roger] Daltrey was all flash. And I love Pete Townshend, but I always thought the Who were a crazy band. [Keith] Moon was an incredible drummer, but only with Pete Townshend. He could play to Pete like nobody else in the world. But if somebody threw him into a session with somebody else, it was a disaster. There’s nothing wrong with that – sometimes you’ve got that one

paintbrush, and you rock it.”

Recently, Richards made headlines for calling *Sgt. Pepper* “rubbish” (he also criticized the Stones’ *Their Satanic Majesties Request* for copying it). Talking about Paul McCartney’s live shows, Richards says, “I like Paul. I don’t know if I could do that all by myself. As long as Paul enjoys what he’s doing. A lot of people enjoy it,” he adds with a shrug. “But I don’t see any *push* out of it.”

**R**ICHARDS MAKES IT abundantly clear that the Rolling Stones still have the “push.” He lets it slip that he just returned from a band meeting in London. “We had a little chat,” he says. The Stones might get together to start working on their first album since 2005’s *A Bigger Bang* as early as Christmas, or after their planned South American tour in early



#### RIP THIS JOINT

With the Stones this year (top), and the Winos in 1988. “After shows, we’d have a drink, a snort and listen to some loud fucking rock & roll,” says Wachtel, at left.

to school still,” Richards says. “So I play Scrabble with him, on my computer. It’s the only thing I use the thing for. I give him the worst words I can think of: *shit-head, asshole*.” A group of local middle-aged women at a nearby table, who had been pretending not to eavesdrop, start laughing.

Richards still talks about his musical heroes like a young fan. He exchanges faxes with Chuck Berry and stays in touch with Jerry Lee Lewis, who he calls “obstinate and beautifully unique.” Now that



2016. "I'd love to shove them in the studio in April, hot off the road," Richards says. "These guys ain't getting any younger, but at the same time, they're getting better."

Since the Stones got back on the road, in 2012, Richards has been more engaged. He's worked with Jagger on choosing the set lists for each show, which he hadn't done for years. One consequence of his Fiji accident was that Richards had to stop using cocaine before gigs, and reduce his alcohol intake. "He was very determined to do that," says a source close to him. Richards says it's helped with his post-show recovery time: "Take cocaine onstage, and you're drenched. Now, half an hour, drive me home, and I'm ready for anything."

In *Life*, Richards boasted that for many years he slept only twice a week ("This means I have been conscious for at least three lifetimes"). Now, he's started going to bed at 1 or 2 a.m., and shrugs off the schedule he kept for all those years. "Done that. Been there," he says.

"[Keith] is the first one in the rehearsal room and the last one to leave," says de Beauport. "Nothing is going to happen without him there."

Richards struggles with arthritis, which has taken a toll on his hands; many of his guitar parts, like the fills in "Honky Tonk Women," have been simplified onstage. But he's gotten creative—he recently learned how to play "Let's Spend the Night Together" in open-G tuning so he can sing and play at the same time. "I don't equate

#### BEGGARS BANQUET

"I think I've taken more out of drugs than they took out of me," says Richards, pictured in 1975.

his musicality to his level of dexterity," says de Beauport. "If he's complaining his fingers are knotty-looking, that doesn't mean he's less musical that day."

Richards may be on good behavior, but he can't help but stir up a little mischief: At a recent Pittsburgh show, the grinning guitarist interrupted Jagger's introduction of the Penn State Concert Choir, abruptly launching the band into "Satisfaction." Sometimes he will begin playing in the middle of keyboardist Chuck Leavell's "one, two, three, four" count-offs, or kick off songs at slower tempos than Jagger prefers. Says de Beauport, "Keith is like, 'Yeah, right—it goes like this.'"

Since they reconciled, Richards and Jagger have had long talks, which Richards said they hadn't done in a long time. One of the conversations has centered on how to open up their sound. "I think Mick Jagger is probably the best blues-harp player that I've heard," says Richards. "He's up there with Little Walter—he amazes me. So we have this conversation: 'You phrase like that—why don't you try to sing more like that?' And Mick would say, 'It's two totally different things!' And my reply is, 'It's just blowing air out of your

mouth!' When Mick is singing, he tends to phrase pretty much the same way as the record goes. Whereas on harp, he'll let it fly. That's basically what we talk about, and probably our bone of contention.

"But we just need to find a good room somewhere, and put in a few microphones," he says. "And away you go."

"I LOVE STUDIOS, EVEN WHEN they're empty," Richards says through a haze of smoke on a studio couch, staring at a couple of Gibson guitars through the glass control-room window. He's quiet; there's nothing but a faint electronic noise. "There's that little hum. Silence is your canvas. You look out there and you think, 'Ah, the possibilities!'"

Richards is here to meet his entourage at Germano Studios in Lower Manhattan, where he recorded much of the new album, before we head to a radio interview. A month after our meeting in Connecticut, he has more wired energy, bouncing his leg, his dark eyes fixating heavily on every question. Richards' hair spills out of a striped bandanna. He's wearing Nike tennis shoes and a snakeskin jacket over a T-shirt that says DO NOT X-RAY. He seems a little more dangerous, laughing as I mention the anecdote about him throwing a knife at a music exec who suggested he change a song during the *Steel Wheels* sessions in 1989. "I've got pretty good aim," he says. "It just missed him."





**KEITH'S  
GREEN ACRES**  
"Connecticut  
reminds me  
of parts of  
England,"  
says Richards.

"I look upon records as an audio painting," he says, gesturing grandly toward the mixing board. "What's needed here? Overload it with guitars – and then take them all out, and just use a bit of this one." It's like your paintbrush is that damn desk with little faders. It's never ceased to fascinate me." Richards used to stay up all night experimenting – overdriving an acoustic guitar into a cheap tape machine to create the sound on "Street Fighting Man," or building the hypnotic intro of "Gimme Shelter" out of layers of guitars.

Many of his songs, like "Before They Make Me Run," skip bars and beats in ways that make them deviously hard to cover. "The beat is something to be played with, moved around," he says. "The beat isn't there as some solid, concrete, one, two, three, four. It's something to shift and fly and move." Richards repeats one of his favorite sayings, which he learned from an "old Rasta": "To think is to stink."

It's time to go to iHeartRadio headquarters. Richards strides out of the studio with his manager, Jane Rose; an ex-

NYPD security guard who he shares with Justin Bieber; and Tony Russell, his personal assistant since 1988, to a waiting SUV – and is greeted by a group of hardcore (and likely professional) autograph seekers, all of whom are middle-aged men.

"One each, Keith, one each!" yells a guy in a baseball cap holding up a Telecaster.

"I'm on the move," Richards says, rolling up the window of the Suburban as the driver hits the gas. But there's traffic, and minutes later, we miss a green light and they return, blocking other cars in the street.

"Watch your backs, brothas!" he says in his best London-Rasta tone. "I cannot do this. You get run over – I get sued!"

Finally, Richards relents, rolling the window back down. The winded mob shove forward LPs of *Beggars Banquet* and *Bridges to Babylon* and the Telecaster. He signs everything, except a *Tattoo You* LP, the cover featuring a face-painted Jagger. "Yeah, I ain't signing *that* motherfucker," he says, rolling up the window as the man pleads. "Wrong side," Richards says. "The other side is me. Hey, boys, use your sense!" He lets out a rusty cackle.

We arrive at the iHeartRadio green room, and an assistant named Matt takes the plastic off a case of small airplane bottles of Absolut, removes one and pours a "nuclear waste" – two ounces of vodka, orange soda and lots of ice – into a red Solo cup. Richards is bubbly, talking about all the smoking in old TV shows like *Perry Mason*. "When I grew up," he says, "you thought you were grown up when you could sneak into a pub and have a cigarette and a drink. And you just grow up. It's a habit – it's not an addiction."

Rose looks skeptical. "OK," she says. "Now, what's the difference between a habit and an addiction?"

"Cocaine is not an addiction," says Richards. "It's only a habit. If you run out of coke, you'll go to sleep and eat a lot, but ain't nothing else gonna happen."

As usual, Richards ignores the no-smoking sign and lights a cigarette. "When we did *Shine a Light*, every politician, all kinds of Secret Service was there," says Guy, remembering the filming of the 2008 Stones concert movie. "I was rehearsing for 'Champagne & Reefer.' Keith fired up a reefer as big as my thumb, and I said, 'Is he faking this for the song?' And he said, 'I don't fake nothing, man.'"

Several giddy company employees surround Richards. They each have a story for him; one tells him about seeing the Stones in 1969. Another's father-in-law made the guitar he played in a *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie. "When I get out, I get fascinated with all these people with all these different things to do," says Richards later. "And they automatically assume that you know everything they're talking about." A producer comes in to brief him on the Q&A. He tells Richards he'll be asked how he created the guitar sound on "Street Fighting Man" and other songs. "And talk about how they relate to this album," Richards says, finishing the sentence. "I get the drift."

"The only thing we ask," the producer says, "is bite the f-bomb. Do your best to try not to let anything slip out."

"I don't 'fuck' a lot," Richards says. He doesn't like too much preparation before interviews, preferring to keep it spontaneous. "The only question I need to hear is, 'How do you plead?'"

While he waits to go on, he talks about seeing Donald Trump at *Saturday Night*

## KILLER SOLO KEITH

Beyond "Happy": Six  
essential Richards tracks

### 'Sing Me Back Home'

"TORONTO TAPES" (1977)

Richards was facing seven years in jail on a heroin charge when he recorded this haunting solo piano take of a Merle Haggard classic he had learned from late friend Gram Parsons. "I thought that was the last time I'd get my hands on instruments for a while," Richards says. "Things didn't look too bright."

### 'Make No Mistake'

TALK IS CHEAP (1988)

Richards mixed reggae and Memphis R&B on this gorgeous duet with Sarah Dash, formerly a LaBelle, whose refined voice works perfectly with Keith's gravelly croon. "When he sings in the lower register, he has such a rich tone," says producer Steve Jordan.

### 'I Could Have Stood You Up'

TALK IS CHEAP (1988)

Richards took "a little stroll through the rock & roll alley" on this lovely tribute to rockabilly and Fifties-style doo-wop with old pal Mick Taylor.

### 'Eileen'

MAIN OFFENDER (1992)

This heartfelt plea suggests the early Beatles playing at a biker bar. "Pavarotti it ain't," Richards says of his voice. "But then again, I don't like Pavarotti's voice."

### 'Deuce and a Quarter'

ALL THE KING'S MEN (1997)

Richards traveled to Levon Helm's barn to join him and Elvis' old bandmates Scotty Moore and D.J. Fontana for an electrifying rockabilly throwdown.

### 'Robbed Blind'

CROSSEYED HEART (2015)

A woozy ballad about a drug dealer who may or may not have killed his girlfriend. Keith wrote it right after waking up: "'Satisfaction' was the only other one I've written in bed, I think," he says.

*Live's* 40th-anniversary party. He does his best Trump impression, hunching down and pursing his lips: "You're the greatest," he says, mimicking Trump saying hello to him and then swooping around to shake someone else's hand. "You're the greatest."

Last night, Richards watched a Trump rally in Dallas on TV. "It was the Donald Trump show. He's got 'em by the balls right now. I don't know how long he can keep up that show without changing the *set list*, but that's another thing. Meanwhile, his closest runner-up is a black neurosurgeon. Between the two of them, they've really smashed up the Republican Party."

Richards is well aware of his own public persona. "I can understand my image in most people's minds," he says. "'Good old Keith will take anything, and do whatever he wants to do.' And that gave me the license to do that. Nine-to-fivers would all like to have the freedom that I have. They've given me the license to shit in the street."

In a short while, in front of a studio audience, Richards will crack jokes about never knowing when the cops are going to show up; tell the story again of how he wrote "Satisfaction" in his sleep; and talk about meeting Muddy Waters in 1964 ("My legs are still shaking").

Later at home, he might read a historical novel, or watch a WWII documentary. But here, he is the Keith everyone is happy to know still exists – the Richards who, when he was facing a trial for allowing pot to be smoked on his property in 1967, told the judge to his face, "We are not old men, and we are not worried about petty morals."

Before that moment on the stand years ago, wrote Marianne Faithfull, "Keith had been overshadowed by Mick and Brian [Jones]. But his defiance made him a major folk hero. This was the beginning of Keith's legend. A symbol of dissipation and the demonic. And the amazing thing is that subsequently, he actually became that. He turned it all to his advantage."

"That one just popped out," Richards says of that day in court. "It was sort of surreal theater to me. From that moment, I felt that it was not just me, and not just the Stones, against the establishment – it was our generation. I realized that there was a bigger jury out there behind me."

"I'll never forget," says Fox, "when he did his book signing in Piccadilly for *Life*, people camped out for two nights, just to meet this great figure. And they filed by with enormous politeness and a kind of love for hours. Keith was completely blown away by that. The fans didn't just love the Stones; they loved *him*."

As he waits to go on, Richards' knees are bouncing. He's fiddling with his lighter, peeling the sticker off. A producer opens the door to give him a five-minute warning. Richards puts on his snakeskin jacket, slaps his knees and gets up:

"It's fuckin' showtime!"



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# VISIONS OF JOANNA

## Birdwatching with Joanna Newsom, indie heroine and proud weirdo

BY JONAH WEINER

IT'S A MONDAY AFTERNOON IN LOS ANGELES, AND JO-anna Newsom – a 33-year-old with the unlikely distinction of being American pop music's premier harp-playing auteur – is about to do some birdwatching. It's about 4 p.m., but Newsom, a night owl and insomniac, just ate breakfast at an old-timey restaurant in Los Feliz. With Miu Miu shades covering her eyes, she walks to her Audi hybrid SUV, which she parked in a comically tight space, and climbs aboard. "I haven't had a car since I was 16 that couldn't fit a harp," she says, as we head off toward Griffith Park.

Newsom, who lives in L.A. with her husband, *Saturday Night Live* alum and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* star Andy Samberg, has sold hundreds of thousands of records and earned champions like Paul Thomas Anderson, who cast her in *Inherent Vice* and directed the video for her most recent single. She's about to release *Divers*, her fourth LP. Like all of Newsom's releases, it wears its staggering ambition – and staggering weirdness – on its beautiful, elaborately brocaded sleeve: The single "Sapokanikan" quotes from Percy Shelley, a 1918 *New York Times* article and George Washington; elsewhere, Newsom sings about oyster harvesting, old mills and Einsteinian space-time. This lyrical hyperabundance matches the music, which draws on unhip genres like Celtic folk, baroque classical and Sixties orchestral pop. The result is as dazzling, and daunting, as the wildest prog-rock opuses.

All of which might seem to make Newsom an odd match for Samberg, whose digital shorts, steeped in pop-culture references, helped usher in the YouTube era. But Newsom says they spend a lot of time talking about making art, and have found fundamentally common ground. "We both do something that relies a lot on dark magic," she says. "Something you can't overexplain or it'll get killed." The couple have been together for eight years. After Samberg left *SNL*, they moved from Manhattan to L.A., marrying in Big Sur in 2013 and reportedly buying a 1920s mansion that in-

cludes, among other head-spinning details, a vaulted glass atrium and a panoply of painted ceilings, tiled walls, stained glass and curved Moorish archways. Newsom emphasizes that those reports remain unconfirmed, and declines to discuss on the record where she does or doesn't live. "I've had a horrible experience of people coming to my house" – mostly in her native Nevada City, California – "and I don't want it to happen again here," she says. "There's a delusion and emotional instability that maybe I should have more compassion for, but my response is pure rage." The couple's friends include Samberg's old *SNL* colleague Maya Rudolph and Anderson, her husband. That friendship led to Newsom's work in *Inherent Vice* as ensemble player and narrator. "With the voice-over stuff, if something was off about the way I was doing it, he'd almost hum a melody and I'd do that melody."

After a quick drive, we step through a cyclone fence and into a bird sanctuary. Newsom wears a sundress whose muted earth tones and subtle Navajo print suggest a chicly tailored tablecloth. "Those are house finches over there," she says. "If there was more agave, we'd see way more ravens. You've got to go a tiny bit west for that. And if there were more flowers blooming, we'd see a shit-ton of hummingbirds."

Newsom absorbed her ornithological know-how from her parents. Her father, an oncologist and hematologist, read up on a variety of subjects, sharing facts about science, history and assorted esoterica; her mother, an internist, was devoted to environmental and feminist causes, and to meetings of her African-drum group, which gathered above the family garage. Newsom says that one of the inspirations for *Divers* was the liberatory experience of watching birds fly. "You watch birds and you glimpse something, like a defiance of certain laws that otherwise seem undefiable. Laws that seem to govern and define our lives in a way that's impossible to transcend." A peregrine falcon appears, strafing some dusty hills high above us. "Is undefiable a word?" she asks. 

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON







# **PUTIN'S ANGELS** **THE RIDE OF RUSSIA'S NIGHT WOLVES**

**BY DAMON TABOR**

The country's largest motorcycle gang is backed by the Kremlin, fighting in Ukraine and hellbent on restoring the empire

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**THE WILD ONE**  
The Surgeon,  
leader of the club,  
in Moscow in May







# The president of Russia's most infamous motorcycle club emerges

from a purifying swim in the still waters of a former slurry pond. He cuts a striking figure: tall, tattooed, plated with muscle. His hair, a leonine mane, clings to his back in dark ringlets. A silver crucifix dangles from his neck. "He goes to the lake, swimming for an hour, to maintain himself in a moral state," says one of his lieutenants, a stout, chain-smoking Kazakh named Arman.

The leader's name is the Surgeon, and he is the president of the Night Wolves, the largest motorcycle club in Russia. He is a busy man. Over the past week, he has been composing the script for the Night Wolves' signature event: an annual bike show held here in Sevastopol – a city on the coast of Russia's recently reacquired Crimean Peninsula – combining motorcycle stunts, military maneuvers and strident nationalist pageantry. One evening, I was told, he also met with Argentina's vice president. Several weeks before that, he challenged a local lawmaker to a duel. The official had objected to a dubious government land deal that would rent a sprawling, defunct gravel factory, where the Night Wolves hold their bike show, at a 99.9 percent discount. (The official declined the challenge.)

After his swim, the Surgeon strides over to a replica World War II fighter plane. A battle tank, imported from a film studio in Kazakhstan, sits parked nearby in the scrub grass. Both would be incorporated into the Night Wolves' bike show in several weeks – a phantasmagorical spectacle celebrating the Red Army's victory over Hitler and intended to feed Russia's growing Soviet nostalgia. "I'm very excited by the topic of war at the moment," the Surgeon

says. "I'm not fucking interested in show just for show. I'm a warrior. I'm fighting for my country, for my history. I'm talking about what Russia is facing now. Especially America, putting the shit on it."

Above the Surgeon's head, a pair of outsize metal puppet hands hang from a rusted conveyor chute. They featured prominently in the previous year's show, wagging malevolently above the stage and appearing to orchestrate goose-stepping "pro-Western" demonstrators below – the Surgeon's reinterpretation of the 2014 Maidan revolution in Ukraine that toppled the pro-Russia president. The Surgeon's narrative echoed the Kremlin's own version of events: Ukrainian fascists overthrew a legitimate government, with secret Western backing, and installed a junta with villainous plans for ethnic Russians. One of the puppet hands had sported a ring, now absent, emblazoned with an eagle logo suspiciously similar to the U.S. presidential seal. "Not Americans," Arman assures me. "It's world evil, international evil."

"All this has meaning," says the Night Wolves' leader, a 52-year-old former dental surgeon whose real name is Alexander Zaldostanov, gazing around at the props of war. "All this is made by Night Wolves. All my vision, everything I have in my head, will be reflected here."

I had traveled to Russia in July to learn about the vision of the Surgeon and his fellow *Nochniye Volki*. A charismatic showman

with a penchant for provocative bombast, the motorcycle club's leader is perhaps Russia's most recognizable nationalist star. Over the past decade, he has transformed a once-underground biker gang into a self-styled vanguard of patriotic holy warriors, reportedly 5,000 strong, with close ties to the Kremlin. In the Russian media, he can regularly be heard trumpeting the country's greatness while warning that its enemies – America, Europe, homosexuals, liberals, traitorous "fifth columnists" – intend to undermine Mother Russia. He and the other Night Wolves often hold motorcycle rallies to promote Russian patriotism and Orthodox Christianity, making rumbling pilgrimages to churches and holy sites. He has vowed to defend the Kremlin from Maidan-inspired protesters and has pledged to die for Vladimir Putin, the country's president. He has famously declared that "wherever the Night Wolves are, that should be considered Russia." Recently, the club held a three-day anti-NATO rally in Slovakia. Lately, the Surgeon has taken to praising Stalin.

Western reporters have dubbed the Night Wolves either "Russia's Hells Angels" or, because of their muscular patriotism, a crucial source of "Russian soft power." But such descriptions fall short. In late February 2014, at the beginning of Russia's takeover of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, the Surgeon was spotted on a flight to Crimea. On the day of his arrival, the Night Wolves were working alongside pro-Russia militias, setting up roadblocks in Sevastopol. In March, according to the U.S. government, they stormed a naval facility, with the Surgeon personally helping to coordinate "the confiscation of Ukrainian weapons with the Russian forces." On March 18th, Russia formally annexed the peninsula. Whether the Night Wolves'

leader acted on his own initiative or on orders from Russian officials remains unknown, but it seems unlikely the Kremlin would not sanction, at least tacitly, an operation of such consequence. (The Surgeon soon received a medal for "the liberation of the Crimea and Sevastopol" in Moscow, Russian media reported.) After fighting broke out in eastern Ukraine weeks later, a Night Wolves chapter joined pro-Russia militias battling the country's army – a grinding conflict that continues and has killed nearly 8,000 thus far. The Night Wolves have been running "humanitarian convoys" into the region

**"I'M A  
WARRIOR,"  
THE SURGEON  
SAYS. "I'M  
FIGHTING FOR  
MY COUNTRY  
AGAINST WHAT  
WE FACE NOW.  
ESPECIALLY  
AMERICA."**

Contributor DAMON TABOR wrote about immigration in 2012.



and, I witness, serving as a police force in Luhansk, one of two self-declared separatist republics.

"For the first time, we showed resistance to the global Satanism, the growing savagery of Western Europe, the rush to consumerism that denies all spirituality, the destruction of traditional values, all this homosexual talk, this American democracy," the Surgeon proudly declared in March.

The gang's rhetoric echoes both a growing wave of nationalism in Russia and a sharp rightward turn in the country's politics. Under Putin's tenure, the Kremlin has jailed journalists and opposition figures, banned "gay propaganda" and crafted ersatz political parties that provide a veneer of self-governance. It has deployed its vast propaganda apparatus – state-controlled radio and newspapers, but above all, television – to fan patriotic fervor. "Russia is like the Kingdom of the Crooked Mirrors," a liberal Muscovite tells me over dinner one night, referring to a Soviet-era fairy tale in which a king uses warped looking glasses to brainwash his people.

The Surgeon and his Night Wolves have flourished in this nationalist ecosystem. The club has reportedly received more than \$1 million in grants from the Kremlin to support patriotic performances like the Sevastopol bike show. On sever-

## BROTHERS IN ARMS

Vladimir Putin with the Surgeon in Moscow, 2009. The Kremlin has granted more than \$1 million to the club. In 2013, Putin awarded the Surgeon an Order of Honor for his "patriotic education of youth."

al occasions, Putin himself has famously mounted a three-wheel Harley and ridden alongside the Surgeon. In 2013, Putin awarded the Night Wolves' leader an Order of Honor for his "patriotic education of youth." In June, the Russian press announced a cosmonaut would carry the club's flag into space. Putin, according to Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert and NYU professor, turned the club into "auxiliaries of the state" as part of a broader push to turn potential adversaries into compliant allies. However true, these assertions shed little light on how a once-countercultural motorcycle gang has come to wield a position of such power and prominence in modern Russia – and, now set loose, what it hopes to achieve.

"We are the army of Russia," the Surgeon tells me. But, he continues, "I don't want to meet any foreigners, as they won't write anything good." (He had agreed to be interviewed, begrudgingly, only after a fel-

low member in Moscow provided a recommendation.) "I will always be bad in their eyes. I'm bad, I'm Putin's gang – fuck it. But this gang is met with flowers. You will see how we will be welcomed in Sevastopol."

The Surgeon trundles a golf cart toward a derelict four-story concrete building – the local chapter's headquarters – then disappears. He is due on a flight, business class, back to Moscow in two hours. Soon, the Night Wolves' leader re-emerges in full biker regalia: black boots, black jeans, black vest bearing the club's flaming wolf's head emblem. Dmitry Simichein, the leader of the Sevastopol chapter, ushers the Surgeon into a tricked-out pickup truck, and we race toward the airport. As Simichein veers in and out of oncoming traffic, occasionally flicking on blue lights on the truck's grille to bully slower cars from our path, I ask about Global Satan.

"The easiest example is the sexual-abuse escalator," the Surgeon replies. "What was considered a sin before, pedophilia" – he means homosexuality – "now it's legalized. They even allow them to take marriage in the Catholic Church! The priests are not just traitors, but Satanists themselves. When these marriages are allowed, tomorrow pedophilia will be fine, then sex with dead people, then eating the shit, and if we don't stop, we will see the abyss of hell."



Ten minutes from the airport, the truck's engine boils over. Simichein pulls off to the shoulder. In the West, the Surgeon has attained outlaw-pariah status – the U.S. recently placed him on its international sanctions list, citing the club's close ties to Russian special services and involvement in Ukraine's conflict – but to some Crimeans, apparently, he is a hero. A woman, along with her young daughter, immediately recognizes our famous passenger. "Just look who is here!" she exclaims in Russian, hurrying over to the window. "Night Wolves! Surgeon!" Starstruck, the woman demands a memento. "It's not often I'm so lucky to have a photo with such a person," she gushes. Smiling gamely, the Surgeon poses with the pair. "We wish you all the health for your patriotism," the woman says before we depart. "From all people from Sevastopol, from Crimea!"



**B**ORN OF MOSCOW'S ANARCHIC underground scene in the 1980s, the Night Wolves were originally a loose gathering of metalheads and bikers headquartered in the boiler room of a Moscow apartment building. President Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika policy had begun easing Soviet strictures: Western music, drugs and an ethos of counterculture rebelliousness were slipping into the capital. The group members relished the newfound freedom. They barreled around Moscow in decrepit Soviet Dneprs and Czech Jawas. They hassled police and brawled with the "Lyubers," working-class bodybuilders from a nearby suburb. They partied to local rock bands. "We would get together every night, 50 to 100 motorcycles," Ed Ratnikov, a close friend of the Surgeon's from that era, told me. "Can you imagine? Traffic police would shit their pants."



## SURGEON RISING

(1) As a dental surgeon and biker in the late Eighties.  
(2) Leading the Night Wolves in Moscow in May.  
(3) Attending services at the Trinity Church in Moscow. "I'm doing exactly what God saved me for," he says.



The Night Wolves' early members included a musician, a mechanic and a massage therapist. Zaldostanov had a residency as a dental surgeon at a Moscow clinic and lived a double life – staying out all night, then climbing into the back window of the clinic to change from leathers to medical dress. (Roos Turin, another founding father of Moscow's early biker scene, says Zaldostanov originally wished to be called "the Dentist," but then deemed it insufficiently menacing.) Early on, the club provided security for local bands and ran protection rackets for black-market businesses hoping to avoid shakedowns from police and gangsters – an enterprise the Surgeon casts in benevolent terms.

"We were Robin Hoods," he says today. "Commercial activities started – numer-

ous tiny shops, stores – and we were protecting them as our friends, but then it became the business. They wanted only Night Wolves to protect them, as we were the dons."

By the early 1990s, the Surgeon – who was charismatic and ambitious – had established himself as the Night Wolves' leader. He was considered the "king of the Moscow scene," according to Hilary Pilkington, a British sociologist who studied the city's counterculture. The Surgeon had been traveling between Moscow and

West Berlin, where he found work as a doorman at the Sexton, a legendary rock club in the city. He lived in a squat and soon married a German woman. (They later separated.) He reveled in the rowdy, unrestrained underground world of Berlin and learned about motorcycle culture from members of the local Hells Angels chapter. "He loved the feeling of freedom here," the Sexton's former owner recently told a reporter. "In his soul, he was punk." By chance, Vladimir Putin – future president of Russia and Night Wolves patron

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: RIA NOVOSTI/AP IMAGES; © DZHAVAKHADZE ZURAB/ITAR-TASS/CORBIS; COURTESY OF ANDREY ORLOV

– was working as a midlevel KGB agent on the other side of the Wall in Dresden.

Around 1991, the Night Wolves began to shed their outlaw origins. That August, members helped man barricades against tanks surrounding Russia's parliament building – part of a failed coup by Communist hard-liners against the reform-minded Gorbachev. His successor, Boris Yeltsin, awarded the Surgeon a medal for his efforts (an honor he now abhors). Soon after, the Night Wolves had a business manager and offers to star in advertising campaigns. "By the summer of 1991, *Khirurg* [Surgeon] himself was more often to be seen on youth television programmes, video clips and in the papers, than at his former notorious hang-outs," Pilkington wrote.

Russia's transition to a Western market economy in the 1990s brought widespread unemployment and organized crime for much of the next decade. The Night Wolves, however, managed to flourish. In 1992, the Surgeon opened the Sexton in Moscow, a rock club modeled on his old haunt in West Berlin. Three years later, the Night Wolves had a tattoo parlor, a bike shop and a "Wolf Wear" clothing line. Their first annual bike show attracted thousands of fans. "Sometimes I can see the surgical table in my dreams," the Surgeon tells me in Sevastopol. "But I understand now I'm doing exactly what God saved me for. So I'm kind of paying my debt. But I have never been so happy in my life as I was with my first motorcycle, a Jawa."

Motorcycle clubs are often a peculiar mix of anti-social defiance and democratic governance, with members making decisions as a group according to a system of voting rules. In the mid-1990s, the Sexton in Moscow burned down and, a few years later, the Surgeon – through a company he owned – acquired two buildings on the outskirts of the city that could accommodate a new club and biker headquarters.

According to Russian journalist Nataliya Telegina, who investigated the deal, many members assumed the new space would be common property. But the Surgeon gave himself exclusive ownership, Telegina tells me. A former member says that the Surgeon also rewrote the club's charter, creating a centralized structure that gave him more power.

"It was like Hitler times in Germany – Hitler was a person who took power in a democratic way," says Ivan, a member of the Moscow Hells Angels chapter. "The

same story was in the Night Wolves. What *Khirurg* asked from the club was special status to have not one, not two votes, but to have *the vote* to make any decision." (Rejecting these claims, a club spokesman states that the Surgeon is "very democratic.") Ivan, a stocky Angel who goes by the name Hippo, and another member named Sascha had agreed to meet at a restaurant in downtown Moscow. Both were former members of the Night Wolves and both had quit in 2001, outraged by what they viewed as the Surgeon's growing megalomania. Along with about eight other former Night Wolves, the two men soon formed the Hells Angels chapter in Moscow.

The Surgeon appears to have flirted with modeling the Night Wolves on the notorious Western motorcycle club – early on, they reportedly operated according to a word-for-word Russian translation of the Hells Angels' rule book. But he has now become an outspoken detractor of so-called outlaw clubs. In the Russian press, he has called them "arms dealers," "demons" and "drug cartels on wheels." In June, the Surgeon asked Russia's parliament to include both the Bandidos and Hells Angels on the government's new list targeting "undesirable" foreign organizations.

Since Ivan and Sascha's departure, the Night Wolves

have entirely left behind their counterculture past. There were the Surgeon's appearances with Putin and financial grants from the Kremlin, but also regular rallies at Orthodox religious sites. There was a "Wolf" holding company providing security and plans for a youth competition combining motorcycles with elements of "combat in ruined buildings, martial arts, possession of firearms and bladed weapons." In January, the Surgeon helped co-found Anti-Maidan, a patriotic group to counter any pro-democracy movements that might take hold in Russia.

"We don't consider them a motorcycle club," Ivan says. "We don't have political organizations. There is quite famous phrase in Russia: If you heard the word patriotism, it means that someone steals something."

"Someone smart said the twisted mind is a good field for the creation of monsters," Ivan continues. "He wanted to be number one. In his world, that's the guy who had more possibilities, more money, more influence or more power. So he just started to construct his world, and he's really successful. He is the minister of biker culture."

**T**HE NIGHT WOLVES' MOSCOW headquarters sits on a desolate river flood plain outside the city, where Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev once dreamed of building a Russian Disneyland. The Sexton has become a mecca for Russian bikers, and the property contains a dance club, several bars and a restaurant serving sushi and "Crimean Tea." The Surgeon, I had read, sleeps on a pullout sofa somewhere in the sprawling compound.

The property has a *Mad Max* Bartertown aesthetic, but also a strongly martial vibe. In the courtyard, two howitzers flank a stage resembling a warship. A Soviet tank sits parked nearby. The Night Wolves have taken a particular interest in educating Russia's youth, and the Sexton also doubles as the venue for the club's Kremlin-funded holiday shows for children. In the 2013 performance, a character resembling the Statue of Liberty attempts to kidnap the snow princess Snegurochka. The Night Wolves thwart her plan. "We set a goal to create an alternative to foreign domination," the Surgeon told a Russian paper. Children "need to see that evil is really scary."

The club's character became notably nationalist around 2009. That July, Putin, then prime minister, followed a meeting with President Obama with a trip to the Sexton. Russian media reported that Putin gave the Surgeon "a huge Russian flag, expressing his hope that the flag would 'protect' them on their way" to the upcoming bike show in Sevastopol. From then on, according to Elizabeth Wood, a Russia scholar at MIT and co-author of the upcoming book *The Roots of Russia's War in Ukraine*, the two men met frequently: "Zaldostanov brought Putin letters and souvenirs from Sevastopol; Putin encouraged Zaldostanov to create pro-Russian shows in Crimea."

For his part, the Surgeon tells me the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. had left him deeply embittered. "All the values were lost, everybody started kicking their history, spitting on their own granddads," he says. "All these pretenders I always hated – they painted themselves so quickly from Communists to capitalists." His disillusionment, he explains, led to a time of desert wandering, a search for answers. Eventually he identified those responsible: proponents of democracy, liberalism, Wall Street. Behind them all lurked the hidden hand. "This democratic system is the same as communism. I see no difference, the same lies, the same fuckery," he says. (He became religious, the Surgeon claims, after meeting a priest at a fellow member's burial service.) Eventually, the Surgeon refashioned the Night Wolves to combat these dark forces – the motorcycle as ve-

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hicle of liberation. "The model was born in the USA," Evgeny Strogov, the leader of the Night Wolves' Nomads chapter, tells me. "We take, but we make little bit different."

Several Russian journalists, however, have identified another member, named Alexey Weitz, as most responsible for the Night Wolves' turnaround. A former theater actor, Weitz joined the club in the mid-2000s while also working for a nationalist think tank, and later became an apparatchik for Right Cause, a political party with a self-proclaimed "patriotic bias" that is supported by the Kremlin. According to British journalist Peter Pomerantsev, Weitz helped give form to the Surgeon's religious and patriotic impulses. As the Kremlin initiated its widespread campaign to quash dissent while mobilizing nationalist fervor, it found an ideal partner in the motorcycle club. "The country needs new patriotic stars, the great Kremlin reality show is open for auditions, and the Night Wolves are... helping the Kremlin rewrite the narrative of protestors from political injustice and corruption to one of Holy Russia versus Foreign Devils," Pomerantsev writes in his recent book *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia*.

Weitz, who wears his hair pulled back in a ponytail and bears a striking resemblance to comedian Ricky Gervais, agreed to meet late one Wednesday night at the Sexton. When I arrive, he is sitting at a table quietly sipping tea. I explain that I am curious to learn more about his role within the Night Wolves. "History will tell my position," he answers obliquely. If I want to understand the Night Wolves, he continues, I need to look into "the phenomena of the Russian soul."

The Night Wolves' relationship with the state is, in Weitz's telling, not a case of cunning co-option but a marriage of convenience. "When people see Putin and the Night Wolves together, they think it's political," he says. "Right now, our interests and the interests of the government are the same. We're going to defend the state because as soon as the state falls down, it's going to be anarchy. There are plans by the Anglo-Saxons – European ideas and liberal lobbies inside the country – that are threatening the values of Russian people."

Later, Weitz shows me a large painting in the Sexton featuring a 14th-century Russian Orthodox monk named Alexander Peresvet. By some accounts, Peresvet

died in a heroic duel with a soldier from the Mongol empire. But in a larger battle that followed, a small Russian force defeated the Mongols' much-superior army – a victory whose importance is disputed by historians but trumpeted today by Russian nationalists as the opening skirmish that freed the country from the Mongol "yoke." Other Night Wolves had mentioned Peresvet, and I had even seen his image on one member's T-shirt. He was, it seemed, their ur-patriot and patron saint. In the Sexton's painting, Peresvet sits astride a horse – the gallant warrior-monk preparing to vanquish invaders and return the motherland to glory. The artist, however, gave the horse a strange feature: The shadow it casts is not equine but that of a stalking wolf.

IN THE SUMMER OF 2014, THE UKRAINIAN military advanced on the pro-Russia militias that had taken control of the cities of Luhansk and Donetsk in the Donbass region. Hundreds of civilians were killed in the subsequent fighting. In Luhansk, electricity failed and water taps ran dry. Food became scarce. Many residents moved into their basements to avoid shelling, while others made tunnels between apartments to keep from venturing outside. A mortuary keeper in the city lived off chocolate bars and pig fat and played Thelonious Monk's "Round Midnight" on his saxophone to put his mind off the war.

Several months later, officials from Ukraine and the self-declared separatist republics signed a cease-fire agreement, but the fighting quickly resumed. The U.S. and other Western countries allege Russia is supporting the rebels with men and supplies, a claim Putin has denied despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. In late 2014, the Ukrainian government established an economic blockade of both breakaway republics, a move intended to break the rebels' grip but one that also made food and medicine scarce for the already-suffering civilian population. In addition to killing thousands, the ongoing war has displaced more than a million residents in Ukraine and devastated entire neighborhoods and villages.

As we drive into the rebel-controlled Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) in mid-July, the scars from the conflict are quickly evident. Artillery has sheared off the corner of an apartment building. But for an orange-

roofed Mr. Kebab stand, many of the businesses are shuttered. "Welcome to the rebel banana state," says Taras, my minder from the rebel government, as we drive into the city's downtown. "This is Ukrainian exterior design," he says, pointing out a flattened building. "It was a vegetarian shop. A heavy military object for sure."

Taras, 26, is the LPR's youthful deputy minister of information. A former graphic designer, he joined the rebels in 2014, then set up a pro-Russian news channel and also conceived the LPR's coat of arms: a red star framed by ears of wheat. Burly and profane, Taras wears a thick beard and is rarely without a cigarette. The Ukrainians have labeled Taras a terrorist, he says, but I find him affable and appealingly subversive. Fiddling with the stereo, he queues up Depeche Mode's "Policy of Truth."

"It's a good soundtrack for propaganda worker," he quips.

I had made the long journey to Luhansk to learn about the city's Night Wolves chapter, which had largely avoided the media exposure of their comrades in Moscow. A few intriguing scraps had slipped out: On its sanctions list, the U.S. government alleged the motorcycle club had recruited fighters for the rebel militias and deployed members to the front lines of Luhansk and Kharkiv. Several, including a member named "Vampire," were reportedly killed. The Night Wolves in Luhansk appeared to have crystallized into a more militant form – a modern incarnation of the warrior-monk Peresvet.

As night falls, Taras drives to a hilltop overlooking the city. The rebel government imposes an 11 p.m. curfew, and residents have moved indoors. Luhansk, which had a prewar population of more than 400,000 people, is mostly black and still. Not far away, a steady stream of orange anti-aircraft fire arcs into the dark sky. "The advantage of the civil war is that all industry died," Taras observes. "If the conflict will move another three years, it will look like *Jumanji*."

In the morning, Taras and I visit the local Night Wolves' headquarters, a defunct sports complex beside the blighted Olkhovka River. As we arrive, a backhoe lifts a bucketful of muck from the water, then deposits it into a dump truck. "I want to resurrect things that were artificially killed," Vitaly, the club's leader, says as we take shade from the sun under a tree. "I feel my inner voice, it is my mission to my motherland." A few other Night Wolves mill around, but the compound is otherwise quiet. Many members departed earlier on a motorcycle run to Russia to promote the "independence of Donbass."

Stern and laconic, Vitaly wears a sidearm and goes by the nom de guerre "the Prosecutor." The motorcycle club, he con-

**"THE THIRD  
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firms, is now acting as a special police squad; another member later tells me they guard gas stations and other sites and occasionally patrol the city for drunks and criminal elements. “We’re a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,” Vitaly says. “We are police, SWAT division.” The leader of another Night Wolves chapter had denied the club’s involvement in Ukraine’s conflict, but Vitaly is surprisingly forth-

stepped on a mine. “Vampire” died in a burning tank. Photographs of the dead men, along with about 100 other rebels, were now memorialized in a glass display case in downtown Luhansk.

Since then, the Night Wolves appear to have transformed into an urban-renewal regiment. They organize local concerts. They dredged tons of garbage from the Olkhovka and poured sand to create a

clear the sweep of his dream is much grander. The mission of Night Wolves, he declares, “is to resurrect the motherland – to connect the pieces that were killed off. We’re one land, one people. We were artificially divided. We have Night Wolves divisions in territories of former Soviet Union. Our mission is to bring the patriotism, orthodoxy, love for motherland and reunite.” There are, I suggest, a great deal of people in these republics with no wish to reunite. “Everyone has his own right to think different,” he replies. “And for those who don’t want to reunite, I have a question: Why do those countries keep them?” Vitaly’s vision of reintegrating former Soviet states is both bold and provocative, and sure to alarm these governments – at least one of which had already begun preparing militarily along its border for such an outcome.

## WOLF PACK

Club members at their base in the rebel-held city of Luhansk, Ukraine, this year. Since 2014, nearly 8,000 people have been killed in the conflict. “We’re a part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,” a member says. “We are police, SWAT division.”



right. “It’s no secret. We’re not ashamed,” he says. “The Ukrainian government is fascist. Here is Russia. That’s why we were staying and defending it.”

In 2014, as the Ukrainian military closed in on Luhansk, according to Vitaly, the Night Wolves helped blockade the city. They later fought in at least four villages and, backed by Russian tanks, laid siege with other rebels to the Luhansk airport held by the Ukrainian paratroopers – a devastating battle that left the facility in ruins. Around 40 Night Wolves took part in the war and at least three were killed. A member named Sergei Koptev was killed by a mortar. Another, nicknamed “Bison,”

beach for locals. In a park adjacent to their compound, they installed a sandbox and gazebos. Wrecked tanks and armored military vehicles and casings from rockets litter their compound – what the club hoped to transform into an open-air museum of “broken Ukrainian art.” In a greenhouse nearby, the Night Wolves are growing tomatoes. “Our nation is crumpled, smashed from long years ago,” Vitaly says. “We are trying to say not everything fell apart. These good things were in a dark corner, but everything can be resurrected.”

At first, I take Vitaly’s notion of resurrection to mean restoring local parks – nation building writ small. But it becomes

**A**S THE UKRAINIAN MILITARY sought to reclaim Donbass from the pro-Russian rebels in the summer of 2014, a village outside Luhansk called Novosvitlivka saw some of the most devastating fighting. Small but strategically important, the town is situated on a highway connecting Luhansk to the Russian border about 20 miles to the east – a conduit between satellite and mothership. The Night Wolves, along with other rebels, battled the Ukrainian army for two weeks for control of Novosvitlivka. In the process, half the town was razed – scores of homes, a kindergarten, the hospital. The town’s House of Culture, whose facade bore a 60-foot mosaic panel called “Tree of Life,” was bombed into ruin. At least 100 civilians were killed.

“There was heavy fighting,” Vitaly recalls, speaking wearily of the battle. “Artillery and street to street. RPGs. A lot of people were killed in their basements.” Ukrainian soldiers also barricaded locals in the town’s church, he claims. “If someone resisted, they killed him.”

On a windswept plaza outside Novosvitlivka, the House of Culture still sits charred and abandoned. But the hospital has been rebuilt – backed by a singer from Donbass known as the Russian Frank Sinatra, rumor has it. Artillery has stayed in the local church’s onion dome; its replacement sits on wood blocks nearby, ready to be fitted snugly atop the roof like a hat. Down the road, I stop at a white four-story apartment complex. In a nearby cellar stairwell, someone had handwritten a plea on the wall: “Attention. Don’t put any grenades into basement!!! There are no terrorists. Only locals.”

During the fighting, many residents hid in the buildings’ cellars. “The Ukrainian army was there,” says Tamara, a retiree with hair dyed the color [Cont. on 68]



# ISLAND LIFE SUMMER FRIDAYS

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THIS SUMMER, ROLLING STONE AND **ISLAND RECORDS** PRODUCED AN INTIMATE “SUMMER FRIDAYS” ROOFTOP SERIES. Industry insiders and music fans sipped complimentary drinks on Friday afternoons on the rooftop at STK Downtown in New York City. Guests enjoyed performances by some of Island’s hottest acts, including Timeflies, Tribe Society, the Karma Killers, James TW, American Authors and That Poppy, as well as a special first listen of Bon Jovi’s new album, *Burning Bridges*. The laid-back, sunny rooftop was the perfect place to celebrate new music and kick off the weekend. 🍹



1) Timeflies prep for their U.S. tour, which kicked off October 1st. 2) The stunning view from STK Rooftop. 3) Tribe Society rocks out on the roof before their NYC residency concert series begins. 4) American Authors frontman Zac Barnett belts out new single “Go Big or Go Home.” 5) American Authors celebrate the end of their August tour with Andy Grammar. 6) Sneak peek at Bon Jovi’s *Burning Bridges* at the exclusive listening party. 7) 17-year-old singer-songwriter James TW performs his song “Sanctuary” for the first time in the U.S. 8) The Karma Killers perform before they embark on the 41-stop Vans Warped tour. 9) Island CEO David Massey, recently signed Island artist Arrow Benjamin, International Director of A&R Daniel Werner. 10) Guests enjoyed STK sliders all summer long. 11) That Poppy debuts her new single, “Lowlife.” 12) Timeflies sing to their hometown, NYC.



# Reviews

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## Jack White Is Dead and Loving It



Illustration by RAÚL ALLÉN

The mercurial star returns to his side band for its raunchiest, most fun album yet



### The Dead Weather

*Dodge and Burn* Third Man

★★★★½

BY JON DOLAN

Robert Plant once described Led Zeppelin's 1971 classic "Black Dog" as a "blatant, let's-do-it-in-the-bath type thing." This would also be an accurate appraisal of the third album by Jack White's side project the Dead Weather—assuming that the only time you *ever* use the bath is for doing it in the bath. The band features White on drums, fire-breathing singer Alison Mosshart of the Kills on vocals, Dean Fertita of Queens of the Stone Age on guitars and keyboards, and longtime White associate Jack Lawrence on bass. Together, they uncork the dirtiest, ickiest thump our man Jack has been part of in some time. It's a fine reminder that he always works best when there's a tough woman around to let him know what's good.

The Dead Weather first came together for a pair of seething, low-stakes albums—2009's *Horehound*, followed swiftly by 2010's even louder *Sea of Cowards*. In the five subsequent years, White has emerged as a restless solo artist, chasing his Medusa muse down whatever forked path it leads him. But *Dodge and Burn*, which they recorded at White's Third Man studios in Nashville, is all business: 21st-century grindhouse blues metal with blood on its fangs and railroad hooch on the breakfast menu.

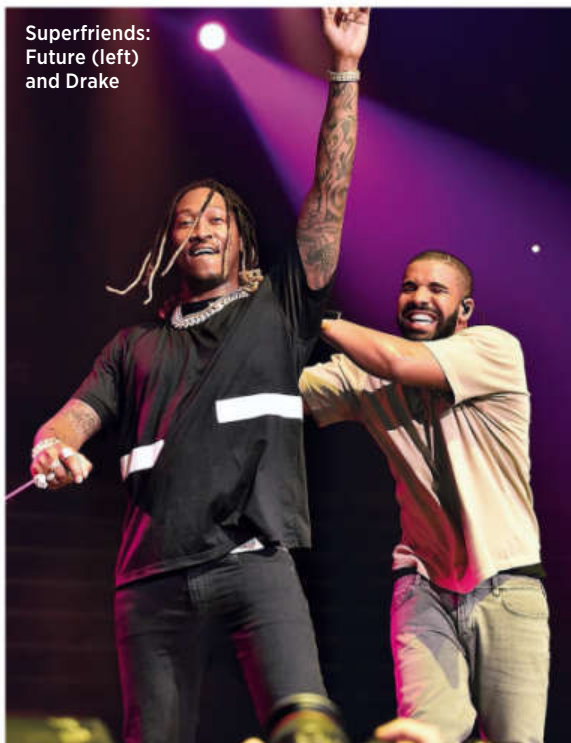


White shares some vocals this time, but he's mainly content to play sideman. On the strikingly Zep-tacular "I Feel Love (Every Million Miles)," he gets his John Bonham on over Fertita's wild guitar squall, for a Viking raid that comes straight from the land of the ice and snow. On "Mile Markers," White is practically dancing behind the kit – it's Southern sugar-shack swagger with a shot of Deep Purple. But the real star of this album is always Mosshart. She was great on the first two Dead Weather LPs, sounding like a demon-punk mistress of the night. Here she ups her range and power, like Patti Smith out on a backwoods prowl. Check out "Buzzkill(er)," where Fertita's guitar sounds like a banshee that accidentally sat on a hot plate and Moss-hart calls out the good Lord himself for laying a guilt trip on her good times – growling, "No mercy will be given me/Down in Tennessee." There's even less mercy to be found on "Cop and Go," a predatory slither straight out of Jimmy Page's dungeon, where Moss-hart informs a lucky victim that it "ain't no time to take it slow." For the dude in the song, it's either gonna be the best night of his life or the last one – most likely both.

One of the album's strongest suits is the way it focuses White's Delta-goth absurdist side through a shit-hot band with an even hotter singer – but without ever entirely squashing that sense of screwball whimsy. "Open Up" is so vicious in its gutbucket brutality that you barely notice Mosshart hollering playful nonsense like, "Bubble gum in your hair isn't fair/But it smells good." Ain't it the truth. The only time this comedic impulse goes a little off the rails is on the album's closing track, a kitschy Broadway ballad called "Impossible Winner" that would still be a dumb slog even if it were five times funnier. It's the only wet-towel moment on a blazing set by a band that really ought to record more often.

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Superfriends:  
Future (left)  
and Drake



## Two Rap Kings at the Height of Their Powers

Drake and Future are living in the moment on their surprise collaborative mixtape

**Drake and Future** *What a Time to Be Alive*

Cash Money/Epic/A1 ★★★★★½



What a time to be alive – and being "alive," as Future and Drake define it, involves having way too many feelings about way too many strippers for way too many sleepless nights. Their surprise mixtape is shrewdly timed, since both MCs are on a creative roll after dropping two of the year's biggest and best albums. It's a quickie, and it sounds that way: a six-day digital dash in the studio. Yet that's why it feels fresh and spontaneous. This is the sound of Future's Dirty South meeting Drake's Great White North, both artists playing off their louder-than-life personalities without overthinking the details.

Future dominates the chemistry, with his producer Metro Boomin behind most of the tracks. Yet both guys get confessional about the struggle. Drake complains about groupies spending too long on their phones, and Future describes that feeling when you mix Adderalls and Percocets in the club, then wonder why you can't get your mind right. The mixtape ends with a pair of solo cuts. Somehow, Drake still sounds like a crafty pop aesthete when he's trying to pick up on Future's spaced-out lunacy. The highlight: "Plastic Bag," a gallant tribute to the stripper who just scooped their hearts off the floor, in the same plastic bag where she stashes their loot.

**KEY TRACKS:**  
"Plastic Bag,"  
"Big Rings"

ROB SHEFFIELD



### Disclosure

*Caracal* Capitol

★★★★½

Fresh faces shine brightest on dance duo's second album

Ultimately, only one star matters on a great dance record: the beats. The follow-up to Disclosure's 2013 debut, *Settle* – the most potent club-pop LP since Fatboy Slim's heyday – flexes an upscaled vocal roster. But DJ magic sometimes takes a back seat to those Jumbotron personas. "Magnets" is a slight Lorde slow jam; "Nocturnal" only peaks once the Weeknd disappears into a digital K-hole. Yet newcomers Lion Babe ("Hourglass") rock their mix, as does MVP Gregory Porter: "Holding On" stretches his opening note over a full minute and turns "sh-shake it" into dizzying gospel-house testimony. Like most jazz singers, Porter knows how to let his collaborators shine too.

WILL HERMES



### Ought

*Sun Coming Down* Constellation

★★★★★

Canadian post-punk crew goes deeper into the anxious groove

Is that the sun coming down – or just a giant ball of fire dropping on your head? These Montreal post-punks write harsh songs for harsh times on their excellent second album. Tim Darcy squawks about trying to keep what's left of his human feelings alive, over abrasive guitar that clangs like Mission of Burma. When he sneers, "Put on your evening attire/We've got a lot of forgetting to do," in "On the Line," he sounds like a cross between the Fall's Mark E. Smith and the grifter on the corner selling you the watch he stole off your wrist an hour ago. "This is the high-water mark of civilization," Darcy says over the throbbing bass-and-feedback groove of the finale, "Never Better." The sad part: He probably means it. ROB SHEFFIELD



## Deerhunter

*Fading Frontier* 4AD

★★★★½

Atlanta's best psychedelic crew makes a wide-ranging, elliptically pretty LP

"I'm off the grid/I'm out of range," Deerhunter's Bradford Cox sings on his band's seventh record. Agreed: No one spaces out like these Atlanta shoegazers and masters of distracted guitar poesy. *Fading Frontier* follows 2013's dark-hued *Monomania* with a brighter, freer dream rock. It's their most eclectic album, from the pacific Sixties psych of "Duplex Planet" to the slurry, Blur-y "Snakeskin" to the warm synth-pop ooze of "Take Care," where Cox, who recently survived a serious car accident, advises, "Raise your crippled hand." The music often summons a sense of escape that's ringed with ambiguity. On "All the Same," the guitars hover in the middle distance as Cox sings about the transgender epiphany of a friend's parent: "No more wife/No more kids/Nothing left to live with." For Deerhunter, life is always being lived station to station. JONDOLAN



## Craig Finn

*Faith in the Future* Partisan

★★★★

Hold Steady frontdude turns rambling man on a warm, emotional solo set

Craig Finn's second solo set has been billed as his New York album, but the eternal Midwest transplant steers the looming dread and thin hopes of these strugglers' tales through Colorado, Pennsylvania, Arizona and other map points en route to the Empire State. It's less about place than emotion, and the positivity is more unsteady than on Finn's Hold Steady anthems. In "Maggie I've Been Searching for Our Son," a believer recovering from a Branch Davidian-style siege seeks an alternative redemption. Elsewhere, women confront dubious choices ("Sarah, Calling From a Hotel") and moments smack of memoir ("Roman Guitars"). The arrangements trump Finn's 2012 solo debut, upscaling that album's roots rock with choral backdrops and horn charts Van Morrison might appreciate. It's a good call for a literary songwriter who deserves, and earns, a broad canvas.

WILL HERMES

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## Ryan Adams

1989 Pax-Am

★★★

**Finding the Morrissey melodies hidden in Taylor's pop triumph**

One year after releasing *1984*, his love-letter EP to mid-Eighties punk, Ryan Adams is back with an album-length cover of Taylor Swift's *1989*. It plays like the latest chapter in Adams' recent Tom Petty-meets-the-Smiths re-imagining of the Reagan years: "You've got that *Daydream Nation* look in your eye," he sings, turning "Style" into a Sonic Youth flirtfest. Part playful genre experiment, part publicity stunt, Adams' *1989* doubles down on Swift's retro conceit, celebrating a decade when it made perfect sense to begin records with sea-gull noises. But the real star here is Swift's material, evidence that she still follows that old Nashville saying: The song always comes first. **JONATHAN BERNSTEIN**



## Toby Keith

35 MPH Town Show Dog Nashville

★★½

**American ass-kicker drinks, gripes about those damn kids**

"The jukebox knows no shame," sings Toby Keith on the honky-tonk boilerplate "Haggard, Hank & Her" – and that's good news for him. Keith's umpteenth studio LP is a 10-piece bucket of his signature country craftsmanship: sobriety-hating, liberal-baiting, self-deprecating, "Drunk Americans" is a charmingly awkward red-blue-state bear hug; the button-pushing title track rues godless youth who need a good whuppin'. Per usual, highlights put hard-earned truths before identity politics. "Sailboat for Sale" echoes Lyle Lovett's "If I Had a Boat." And "Beautiful Stranger" is about rediscovering a lover who might be your spouse. It's smart, subtle songwriting – because Keith can do that, too. **WILL HERMES**



What a ham: Miranda as Alexander Hamilton

# 'Hamilton' Soars From Broadway to Your Speakers

**Broadway revolutionary Lin-Manuel Miranda enlists the Roots to make a powerful cast LP**

**Various Artists** *Hamilton: Original Broadway Cast Recording* Atlantic ★★★★★½



"Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?" Anyone would be lucky to have Broadway innovator Lin-Manuel Miranda tell his or her story, and this time Founding Father Alexander Hamilton is the fortunate son. Miranda has created an exemplary piece of musical theater in his smash hit *Hamilton*. This album, created with help from the Roots, pulls off something even more impressive: It proves that a cast soundtrack LP can work as a powerful, cohesive, exhilarating pop experience in the 21st century.

This presentation of *Hamilton* is a textured labor of love, showing and not simply telling how its title character went from "young, scrappy and hungry" to "an Icarus [who's] flown too close to the sun." Miranda's music and lyrics smoothly fuse Nineties hip-hop, girl-group R&B and more into classic theatrical forms, and dramatic highlights like "My Shot" and "Stay Alive" are as stirring on record as they are onstage. Act One stunner "Satisfied" might be Miranda's finest moment, with co-star Renee Elise Goldsberry dipping in and out of Nicki Minaj-style rhymes and Bernadette Peters-y vocal runs in a heartbreaking performance as Hamilton's sister-in-law Angelica Schuyler. Tickets to the show may be sold out until approximately forever, but this album is an excellent replacement. **BRITTANY SPANOS**

**KEY TRACKS:**  
"My Shot,"  
"Satisfied"



## Deafheaven

New Bermuda Anti-

★★★

**Metal innovators take a turn toward the conventional**

Deafheaven's head-turning 2013 breakthrough, *Sunbather*, cross-pollinated headbanging black-metal vitriol and spacey shoegazing in ways that made them seem like subversive iconoclasts. On their follow-up, though, they're out to prove that they're a true metal band, with a more generic sound built on screeched vocals and chugging riffs. There's some beauty to be found amid the bleakness – check the lyrical guitar solos of "Brought to the Water" and "Baby Blue," the Smashing Pumpkins-style strumming on "Gifts for the Earth," or the album's occasional Pink Floyd atmospherics. But *New Bermuda*'s few epiphanies are surrounded by waters too rough for most listeners. **KORY GROW**



## Chvrches

Every Open Eye Glassnote

★★★½

**Scottish trio get high on gushy synth-pop and rough breakups**

Chvrches is the sound of Scottish studio rats tapping the I-will-survive energy of disco triumphalism, often to dazzling effect. The Glasgow trio's second album builds on the synth-surge of their arresting 2013 debut, *The Bones of What You Believe*. They're not big on verse-chorus structure, going instead for roiling anthems that start big and only get grander: "Clearest Blue" is Depeche Mode's "Just Can't Get Enough" as an elephantine EDM high-five. All that open space gives singer Lauren Mayberry loads of room to celebrate the power of post-post-breakup freedom ("Bury it and rise above!" she sings on "Bury It"), almost as if the fun of leaving fools in the dirt is better than love itself. **JON DOLAN**





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# A New American Classic

Think you know what a great biopic should be? Think Different

By Peter Travers

## Steve Jobs

Michael Fassbender,  
Kate Winslet, Seth Rogen

Directed by Danny Boyle

★★★★

IF YOU'RE GOING TO INTERPRET on film the searching mind of an indisputable genius, it helps not to make too many dumbass moves. On that basis, score a triumph for *Steve Jobs*, written, directed and acted to perfection, and so fresh and startling in conception and execution that it leaves you awed. Michael Fassbender rips through the role of the volcanic Apple co-founder and CEO who sucked at personal interaction but soared at transmogrifying personal computing and everything digital from music, animation (Pixar) and publishing to those iPhones we wear like a second skin. Fassbender's Jobs is a tornado of roaring ferocity and repressed feeling. He's also charming and seductively funny, which makes him dangerous if you get too close. Fassbender gives a towering performance of savage wit and limitless firepower. Is he really that good? Hell, yeah.

The script, by Aaron Sorkin, an Oscar winner for *The Social Network*, is sheer brilliance. Sorkin didn't so much follow Walter Isaacson's best-selling Jobs biography as absorb it into his DNA and release it with a daring structure and point of view all his own. Sorkin divides the movie into three time frames, each filmed in different formats by the gifted cinematographer Alwin Küchler and each involving the launch of a new Jobs product.

The first part, shot on low-res 16mm film, is set in 1984 in Cupertino, California, where Jobs, 29, debuts the Macintosh. The second part, presented on widescreen 35mm, unfurls at



Fassbender, as Jobs, conducts a life story.

the sleek San Francisco Opera House in 1988 when Jobs, axed by Apple, presents his NeXT cube to mass indifference. The final part, utilizing high-def digital, takes place in 1998 at San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall, where Jobs, back calling the shots at Apple, gives the iMac its famed send-off. Dazed by the tech-speak and whirlwind innovations? Sorkin offers no sympathy. Echoing Jobs' rush to the next big thing, Sorkin counts on you to keep up. It's a challenge worth taking.

Cheers to master filmmaker Danny Boyle (*Slumdog Millionaire*, *Trainspotting*, *127 Hours*) for directing Sorkin's three-act play with the hurtling speed of a white-knuckle thriller. Boyle also knows how to fill the spaces between words so they reveal the emotions of the multitudes who come and go in Jobs' hectic life. Sorkin moves characters around his cinematic chessboard (shades of *Birdman*) with little regard to whether they were actually present during Jobs' backstage rampages. Still, their actions and reactions have the ring of harsh, abstract truth.

The actors could not be better, as they thrust and parry over 14 years with the man who compares himself to Julius Caesar, an emperor surrounded by enemies. A superb Seth Rogen finds the bruised

say "hello." And Jeff Daniels, an iconic Sorkin interpreter on HBO's *The Newsroom*, nails every nuance as John Sculley, the Apple CEO who fires Jobs and sparks his cruel revenge.

Can anyone tame this perfectionist beast? Polish-born marketing chief Joanna Hoffman comes close. As played by the glorious Kate Winslet, award-caliber and radiating grit and grace, Hoffman is the one person ready to give shit to the boss. She berates Moneybags for letting his former lover Christian Brennan (Katherine Waterston) live on welfare and for denying paternity of their five-year-old daughter, Lisa (Makenzie Moss). Nine-year-old Lisa (Ripley Sobo) gets closer to the old man. But it's not until 19-year-old Lisa (a stellar Perla Haney-Jardine) fights her controlling, withholding dad on

his terms that Jobs takes his first real steps toward her.

Sorkin never goes soft on his protagonist, an adopted child with an ugly streak built to keep those closest to him at a distance. But Fassbender lets us see flickers of humanity. What we don't see is the older, even richer Jobs who married



**THE WOMAN BEHIND THE MAN** Winslet, with Fassbender, plays the one Jobs exec with the guts to take on the Macintosh man.

heart in Steve "Woz" Wozniak, the Apple co-founder who can't laugh off Jobs' refusal to credit his team with the success of the Apple II computer. Michael Stuhlbarg shows us the pain in software developer Andy Hertzfeld, who suffers the wrath of Jobs for failing to make the Mac prototype

Laurene Powell, had three children, created more Apple miracles, fought the pancreatic cancer eating away at his body and died in 2011 at age 56.

*Steve Jobs* the movie aims to catch the man at three public points when people who defined their lives in relation to his showed up at the last minute to give him holy hell. Harsh? Yes. But essential to a film about a pioneer who created products with a slick, spotless veneer to hide all the tangled circuits inside. In *Steve Jobs*, sure to rank with the year's very best films, we see the circuits without ever diminishing the renegade whose vision is still changing our digital lives.

## Bridge of Spies

Tom Hanks, Mark Rylance

Directed by Steven Spielberg

★★★

WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO COZY up to an old-school spy thriller that knows how to build tension and tighten it? *Bridge of Spies* may be a snooze to the ADD crowd allergic to historical drama, but it's dished out by experts. That's director Steven Spielberg and star Tom Hanks, working from a Matt Charman script polished by the Coen brothers, no less. Their topic is the pivotal moment in the Cold War when an American U-2 spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960 and the U.S. had to negotiate the release of its captured pilot, Francis Gary Powers (Austin Stowell). The way to do it, according to lawyer James B. Donovan (Hanks), is to exchange Powers for Col. Rudolf Abel (the exceptional Mark Rylance), a British-born Russian spy working undercover in Brooklyn until the FBI jailed him on conspiracy charges in 1957. His capture, excitingly staged by Spielberg, starts the movie on a high.

Then the hard sell kicks in. Take the insistent score by Thomas Newman, filling in for Spielberg regular John Williams. Even the trailer seems to bellow: "In the shadow of war/ One Man showed the world/ What we stand for."

Since that *One Man* is played by Hanks, an actor with an estimable gift for understatement (see Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*), the trumpets are unnec-

essary. Donovan is an insurance lawyer, with a wife (Amy Ryan) and kids at home. When his boss (Alan Alda) volunteers him to represent Abel, Donovan is suddenly reviled as the guy who's trying to free a traitor. Hanks expresses Donovan's quiet heroism with admirable restraint. It's the script

## Beasts of No Nation

Idris Elba, Abraham Attah

Directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga

★★★★½

HARD TO WATCH, IMPOSSIBLE to forget. That's *Beasts of No Nation*, a grueling war story set in an unnamed African country. Idris Elba gives a power-

and inklings of a buried conscience that make his brutality even scarier. The Oscar for Best Supporting Actor should have his name on it. But it's the remarkable Attah, whose young face reflects a hellish journey, that makes this fierce movie a blazing, indelible achievement.

## The Walk

Joseph Gordon-Levitt

Directed by Robert Zemeckis

★★★

EXPECT THE WORST FROM the first half of *The Walk*. That's the part before high-wire artist Philippe Petit (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) hits New York in 1974 and strings up a wire between the World Trade Center towers. Director and co-writer Robert Zemeckis kills time with curdled whimsy as Gordon-Levitt, speaking in zee outrageous French accent, shows us Petit's early years as a Paris street magician, student of Papa Rudy (Ben Kingsley) and lover of Annie (Charlotte Le Bon). But then, oh, baby, does this movie fly.

We're off from the first suspenseful minute as Petit and his accomplices sneak into the towers (prepare to choke up at the digital re-creation), set up shop and pull off the most lyrical and illicit piece of performance art in, like, ever. Sure, James Marsh's striking 2008 documentary *Man on Wire* traveled the same road. But Zemeckis, a technical virtuoso, does it in 3D IMAX. With the help of cinematographer Dariusz Wolski and a killer FX team, *The Walk* puts us up there 1,360 feet above the ground so we can almost feel the swirling air, the tautness of the wire and the rush of exhilaration. Well, we could if Zemeckis didn't pile on the voice-over telling us exactly what Petit is thinking. Ignore the tell and focus on the show, spectacular in every sense. The wondrous Gordon-Levitt has always been an actor of natural acrobatic finesse. Here, with lessons from Petit himself, he finds the poetic joy in performing that honors what the movie is about, a man who truly believes art can give you wings.



(1) Lawyer Hanks questions Russian spy Rylance in *Bridge of Spies*. (2) Gordon-Levitt, as Philippe Petit, is the man on the wire between the Twin Towers in *The Walk*. (3) Elba builds an army in *Beasts of No Nation*.



that pushes it, with Abel calling him "the standing man" who gets back up to do right when he's knocked down.

*Bridge of Spies* works best in the gray areas, when Donovan sees Abel and Powers as patriots doing the bidding of their countries. It resonates when Spielberg gives us action that defines character, as in Donovan's trip to Berlin, where conspiracies damn near kill him. During the climactic prisoner exchange on the Glienicke Bridge, there are moments when we can't tell good from bad, and standard spy stuff becomes a potent provocation.

house performance as the commandant, the warlord of a rebel army that trains children as soldiers. His new recruit is Agu (Ghanaian discovery Abraham Attah), a boy who saw his family slaughtered. His army indoctrination includes heroin ("brown-brown"), sexual abuse and killing with a machete.

In adapting the novel by Nigerian-American author Uzodinma Iweala, writer-director Cary Joji Fukunaga (*True Detective*, Season One) is unsparing in treating this timely, terrifying subject. Elba (*The Wire*, *Luther*) gives the commandant a lethal swagger



## NIGHT WOLVES

[Cont. from 59] of an eggplant, pointing at a nearby area. “The pro-Russian side was shelling to make them leave.” She and her husband, along with other residents, spent three weeks living in a dank warren of rooms in her building’s basement. Several soiled mattresses still lie on the dirt floor. “It was very cold. We ate what we had in our houses,” she says. Emerging from the basement one day, Tamara continues, she discovered a man sitting in his car. He had been decapitated by shrapnel from an artillery shell. “Sometimes we buried locals here in the garden, and after we transferred them to the cemetery,” she says, looking at a tangled bed of morning glories. But someone mined the cemetery, and so she and the others often left the bodies buried where they were.

The war in Donbass began to assume its own runaway logic. As civilian casualties mounted and both sides committed atrocities, people inevitably joined the conflict as much for reasons of ethnicity or national sovereignty as retaliation. Both sides pumped out propaganda: Pro-Kiev Ukrainians were “neo-Nazi fascists”; pro-Russians “terrorists.” There were reports of concentration camps, crucifixions of children. In Novosvitlivka, Russian media alleged Ukrainian forces had shot some residents and locked others inside the church, then mined the area. (The church’s priest tells me, however, the Ukrainians handed out meals, and no one was killed despite two direct hits from artillery shells.) In this distorted reality, it was as George Orwell wrote: “Everyone believes in the atrocities of the enemy and disbelieves in those of his own side.”

One afternoon, Taras and I drive into the rolling farm country outside Luhansk to an Orthodox church perched atop a hill. It had been built by Nikolai Tarasenko, an enigmatic Russian archaeologist who, inspired by divine instruction, had quit his profession in the 1990s to build a “temple” in the Donbass. The site has since become famous and, according to Taras, Tarasenko is also known as a hermit philosopher and sometime prophet who might offer tidings of the war. A member of the Cossacks, the legendary horsemen who once guarded the Russian empire’s remote frontier, he has been fighting since the beginning of the conflict.

“Before the war, we prayed and built,” says Tarasenko, who is in his late sixties with few remaining teeth and a rheumy eye, sitting at a long kitchen table. “And when war came we took the weapon, and now we are praying and fighting.” He has spent the past 20 years building the church, but it remains unfinished – the conflict appears to have entirely subsumed his work. Every week, a small detachment of locals – often including Tarasenko himself – travels to the front line about 40

miles away. The war has passed some point of no return, Tarasenko feels, and he cannot stop fighting. Kiev has “special teams” that would kill him and has deployed mercenaries – a story widely disseminated by Russian propaganda.

Rising from the kitchen table, Tarasenko leads us outside to see the church. Inside the bare sanctuary, he ascends a rickety ladder, then steps out onto a small balcony with a commanding view of the valley. “The great war is still to come,” he tells me. “According to the prophecies, the war will move north from Luhansk and Donetsk to the Russian Federation and west to Ukrainian territory. It’s the third world war – U.S., Europe, Asia. Everyone will be involved. I don’t want it, but I have seen it.”

**I**N AUGUST, A LONG COLUMN OF BIKERS rode into Sevastopol to inaugurate the Night Wolves’ 2015 multiday bike show, “The Forge of Victory.” Astride a motorcycle accented with crocodile skin, the Surgeon led the procession. Vitaly was close behind, along with hundreds of bikers from Grozny, Tatarstan, Belarus and Tajikistan, and even one group from Siberian Yakutsk that had traveled nearly 10,000 miles. The Surgeon had remained cryptic about the show’s content, but a few details had been revealed: The event would showcase the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany and, according to the club’s website, train “young people in the spirit of patriotism, on building a peaceful alternative to the Maidan to destroy Ukraine – an alternative to the ruthless terrorism and its sponsors.”

On the show grounds, thousands of fans erected camping tents around the slurry pond. There were recreational bikers, members of other clubs, teenagers, families with babies. There were stalls selling kebabs and beer and booths about animal husbandry. The Black Sea Fleet had a recruiting booth. The Surgeon was seemingly everywhere: posing for photos, signing autographs, unveiling a new prototype motorcycle dubbed the “Stalinet.”

Around midnight on August 21st, the main show began. An air-raid siren wailed ominously. A Nazi bomber, suspended from a building, rose above the crowd. Explosions followed, clouds of smoke. A Russian mother ran clutching her daughter in terror; a man on fire leapt from a balcony. Suddenly, the guttural voice of the Surgeon, from a crow’s nest above the battle, rolled over the crowd: “The great patriotic war was the war of good with evil, light with shadow, love with hate, paradise with hell.”

German panzer tanks and columns of SS soldiers appeared. They mercilessly executed several men and herded Russian women and children onto flatbed trucks. Then, from the shadows: a Red Army brigade. Firing their rifles and machine guns,

they advanced forward. The SS began to fall one by one. There was a triumphant yell, a surging charge by the Russians. A Soviet T-34 tank, a museum piece brought in from Volgograd, rumbled forward. The Germans were finished.

From his perch, the Surgeon declared, “The Holy Grail of the victory with never-ending shine and eternal light, the same as the Burning Bush, was shining in the darkest years of Russian grief. From this Grail we were watering the faint sprout of the new state, Russian State, and it was growing among the droughts and gales.”

Various dignitaries from Crimea, including the governor of Sevastopol, watched from a VIP platform. The Night Wolves had invited Putin, but he chose not to attend. The president’s absence was perplexing, given his staunch support of the Surgeon, though the Russian press hardly mentioned it. Shortly after, however, Russian marines and tanks were spotted at a Syrian air base. Within weeks, Putin unveiled a major diplomatic push – more military aid, a possible peace plan for Syria – to shore up the country’s embattled president, Bashar al-Assad. Syria’s dire circumstances, many analysts speculated, had presented Putin with an irresistible gambit: bolster an ally and divert attention from the conflict in Ukraine, while also allowing Russia to once more reassert itself as a forceful presence on the global stage.

As the show continued, giant pneumatic hammers swung up and down and a small army of Soviet proletariat – metalurgists, factory laborers, dancing atomic-bomb makers – began to heroically rebuild the country. The show was an unrecognizable heir of the Night Wolves’ early productions. They had been loose, homespun affairs, bawdy and anarchic: Men dressed as knights jousting on motorcycles. Women stripteasing with snakes. One biker even waving an American flag. “I still have the freedom. I always have it – maybe not so much as before,” the Surgeon told me when we spoke in Sevastopol. “But now other things are more important for me: That is the struggle for my motherland, and I’m a soldier in this struggle. It’s my fight, it’s my war for my country.”

The spectacle reached its stirring climax. Fireworks erupted in the sky. A contingent of Night Wolves rolled out to greet the large crowd cheering for the performance that was a looking glass reflecting a Russia as it had been, as they might be persuaded to see it once more: unbowed, undiminished, fearsome. At least 100,000 people on the show grounds, with millions more watching the live broadcast on state television, looked upward as a gilded coat of arms bearing a Soviet star, a czarist double-headed eagle and ears of wheat – a heraldic nationalist symbol of the Night Wolves’ own creation – rose high above the crowd in Sevastopol. It was an empire production. 

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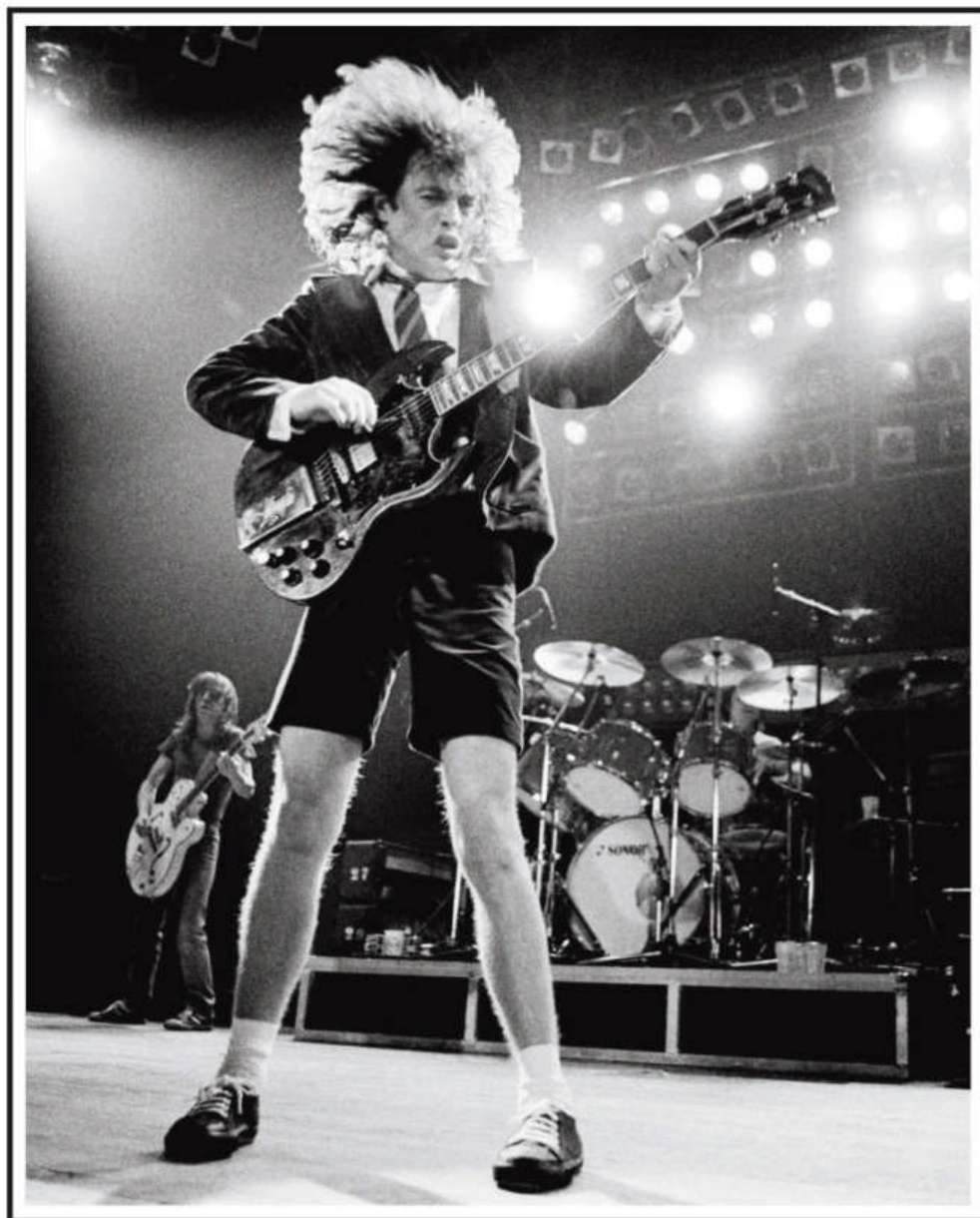
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RS 329 OCTOBER 30TH, 1980

## AC/DC Get 'Back in Black'

In February 1980, AC/DC's Malcolm and Angus Young received devastating news: Their frontman, Bon Scott, had died after a night of debauchery. It could have meant the end of the band, but the Youngs had other ideas. "I thought, 'Well, fuck this, I'm not gonna sit around mopin' all fucking year,'" Malcolm told *ROLLING STONE*'s David Fricke. "So I just rang up Angus and said, 'Do you want to come back and rehearse?'" Within weeks, the restless band recruited a new singer, 32-year-old Brian Johnson, and headed to the Bahamas to record *Back in Black*. The blockbuster album went on to sell 50 million copies, making AC/DC even more popular, and cockier than ever. "I'd like to lock [our critics] up in a cell with AC/DC music for a week," Johnson told RS. "They'll be crying, 'Let me out!' Then I'll put on a week's worth of disco music – and I'll bet you a pound to a pinch of shit they'll be hung by their own belts. With AC/DC, at least they'll come out singing the choruses."

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### Reviewed in the Issue

#### Van Morrison

*Common One* Warner Bros.



"On *Common One*, there's almost none of the darkness and cryptically private imagery that have made him so difficult to many in the past. Instead, as befits the next step in his recent groping for serenity that began with the deck-clearing of *Wavelength* and continued on last year's *Into the Music*, the current mood seems calm and soothing."

#### The B-52's

*Wild Planet* Warner Bros.



"Fun is a void the B-52's drift through like asteroids, a vast expanse littered with cultural artifacts they keep bumping into: *Gilligan's Island*, *Star Trek*, Petula Clark, Lesley Gore, the Mashed Potato, the Supremes, *Beach Blanket Bingo*. ... They're connoisseurs of trash in a world full of it."

#### Molly Hatchet

*Beatin' the Odds* Epic



"They rely on Dixie-rock obsessions already recorded for posterity by every Confederate band from the Allman Brothers to ZZ Top. So it's just as well that these guys simply beat the daylights out of this stuff with a Godzilla-style attack that summons visions of Lynyrd Skynyrd in black-leather biker's gear or the Blue Öyster Cult in muddy overalls."

### 1980: On the Charts

Week of November 1st

- 1 "Woman in Love" Barbra Streisand Columbia
- 2 "Another One Bites the Dust" Queen Elektra
- 3 "He's So Shy" Pointer Sisters Planet
- 4 "Upside Down" Diana Ross Motown
- 5 "Lady" Kenny Rogers Liberty
- 6 "The Wanderer" Donna Summer Geffen
- 7 "Real Love" Doobie Brothers Warner Bros.
- 8 "I'm Alright" Kenny Loggins Columbia
- 9 "Jesse" Carly Simon Warner Bros.
- 10 "Never Knew Love Like This Before" Stephanie Mills 20th Century Fox



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